

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TRADITION
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO 1 PETER 2.2

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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The thesis begins by examining some of the problems connected with tradition, setting them in an ecumenical context. The particular problem of continuity and contemporaneity/actuality emerges and is examined in the light of modern Biblical scholarship, both Protestant and Catholic. In the handling on of tradition, understood primarily as the gospel itself, the church is seen to be in a learning process, and the image of the child with particular reference to 1 Peter 2.2 as a perspective on this is proposed.

Chapter two deals with introductory matters relating to 1 Peter, particularly the questions of the unity of the letter and its purpose. It is argued that the letter, written probably toward the end of the first century, is a unity, whatever traditional elements it may incorporate, and was written to encourage Christians in Asia Minor who were facing some unofficial, sporadic hostility. The letter, therefore, displays a consistency of thought and of purpose.

Chapter three examines briefly the place of the Child in the Ancient World, in Graeco-Roman and Biblical-Jewish thought. The attitude is on the whole unfavourable; childhood is an age to be passed through as quickly as possible to arrive at mature adult understanding. Even in Judaism, where the school-child is much praised, this reflects not so much praise of the child as of the importance of learning Torah.

Chapter four surveys the use of the child image at other points in the New Testament, notably in Matthew, Paul and Hebrews, in order to discover more clearly its use at 1 Peter 2.2. In Matthew, the image portrays a pattern of discipleship in which the church, in the knowledge of the revelation of the Kingdom in Jesus, follows him in lowly obedience. The question of a double standard in such discipleship is discussed and rejected. In Paul, in 1 Cor., the image refers not so much to an immature stage beyond which the readers, as Christians, ought to have progressed, but to an immature state incompatible with life in the Spirit. In the question of the correct understanding of the gospel and the traditions which Paul has handed on, his role as an apostle authoritatively to impart them is decisive. Again the question of two levels of teaching is discussed and rejected. In Ephesians, the child image again describes not an immature stage but a state of worldly existence, contrasting with the linked images of the Body and the Building. Hebrews owes more to Stoic categories, especially in the distinction in diet between milk and solid food. However, in the context of the writer's argument, the child image again denotes essentially a state incompatible with true Christian understanding.

Chapter five returns to 1 Peter 2.2, the image of the child being understood not in the light of Jewish proselyte practice nor Hellenistic initiation rites but of the writer's theme of consolation and exhortation. In the context of the writer's concern for the readers' continued adherence to the gospel, the image is really a composite one. He has underpinned a description of them as $\beta\rho\epsilon\phi\eta$ with $\alpha\rho\tau\iota\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\tau\alpha$ i.e. the readers as God's chosen and obedient people Israel who know the gospel's truth, as $\beta\rho\epsilon\phi\eta$, are begotten through it. In this way, the gospel informs their lives as Christians. The content of this gospel is summarised at 1.11 as Christ the Obedient Righteous One of God, corresponding to his understanding of the readers as righteous obedient ones. The writer works this out in a double way; on the one hand for the suffering righteous ones the gospel is proof of God's vindication of his elect, and on the other hand it is those who suffer righteously whom God vindicates. In this way the writer does justice to the question of continuity in the tradition process in relation both to the readers' past experience of the gospel and to their continued adherence to it in face of opposition. He also does justice to the question of contemporaneity/actuality, interpreting/
Use other side if necessary.

interpreting and adapting the gospel to meet the present need of the readers. And the readers, in obedience to this gospel, are summoned to learn its truth and discover its relevance in their life and conduct.

Chapter six draws some conclusions for the church's proclamation in the present time. In the tension between continuity and contemporaneity, it is suggested that one should not simply polarise tradition and experiment as if what is tradition is something always to be avoided and to look for new departures every time. The giving of traditional answers may in fact be helpful, always provided that they have been freshly arrived at i.e. provided that real learning and renewed understanding have taken place. Where no traditional answer seems possible or helpful, it is suggested that the church must adopt a venturesome faith in which knowledge is to be seen not as the pre-condition of involvement but its consequence. Finally it is suggested that there is a need for a more theological as opposed to a purely Christological dimension to the question since the tension between continuity and contemporaneity inherent in tradition is so often felt at the point of the church's involvement in what she believes to be God's world.

PREFACE

In submitting this thesis, I would wish to record my indebtedness to many for their interest, suggestions and assistance. In particular, I would wish to express my gratitude to the following: to the Reverend Professor Paul S. Minear, formerly Winkley Professor of Biblical Theology at Yale University, who supervised a year of research in that university and who awakened my interest in tradition as a theological and ecumenical problem; to the Reverend Professor Hugh Anderson who has supervised the writing of this thesis, who gave freely of his time to discuss details and make suggestions, and from whose scholarship and friendship I have benefited greatly; to Mr J. Howard and Mr Iain Hope and the staff of New College Library for their ready assistance in obtaining books and articles; to the University of Edinburgh for the award of a postgraduate studentship which enabled me to study full time; to Miss L.C. Robertson who has typed the thesis, for her skill and for her patience in working with an untidy manuscript; and ever to my wife Patricia for her unfailing affection, sympathy and encouragement.

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS ---

B.Z.	-	Biblische Zeitschrift
C.B.Q.	-	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Ec. Rev.	-	Ecumenical Review
E.T.	-	Expository Times
E.T.L.	-	Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses
Ev. Theol.	-	Evangelische Theologie
H.J.	-	Heythrop Journal
H.T.R.	-	Harvard Theological Review
I.C.C.	-	The International Critical Commentary
J.B.L.	-	Journal of Biblical Literature
J.T.S. (n.s.)	-	Journal of Theological Studies (new series)
K. und D.	-	Kerygma und Dogma
Nov. Test.	-	Novum Testamentum
N.T.S.	-	New Testament Studies
R.B.	-	Review Biblique
R.D.P.R.	-	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse
R.G.G.	-	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Dritte Auflage, Tübingen 1957-65
S.J.T.	-	Scottish Journal of Theology
S.N.T.S.	-	Societas Novi Testamenti Studiorum
Stud. Theol.	-	Studia Theologica
T.D.N.T.	-	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
T.Q.	-	Theologische Quartalschrift
Theol. Rund.	-	Theologische Rundschau
T.S.K.	-	Theologische Studien und Kritiken
T.u.U. (Stud. Evang.)	-	Texte und Untersuchungen (Studia Evangelica)
T.Z.	-	Theologische Zeitschrift
W.C.C.	-	World Council of Churches
Z.N.W.	-	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
Z.T.K.	-	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

SUMMARY

The thesis begins by examining some of the problems connected with tradition, setting them in an ecumenical context. The particular problem of continuity and contemporaneity/actuality emerges and is examined in the light of modern Biblical scholarship, both Protestant and Catholic. In the handing on of tradition, understood primarily as the gospel itself, the church is seen to be in a learning process, and the image of the child with particular reference to 1 Peter 2.2 as a perspective on this is proposed.

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Chapter five returns to 1 Peter 2.2, the image of the child being understood not in the light of Jewish proselyte practice nor Hellenistic initiation rites but of the writer's theme of consolation and exhortation. In the context of the writer's concern for the readers' continued adherence to the gospel, the image is really a composite one. He has underpinned a description of them as βρέφη

with ἀπειθήνους i.e. the readers as God's chosen and obedient people Israel who know the gospel's truth, as βρέφη, are begotten through it. In this way, the gospel informs their lives as Christians. The content of this gospel is summarised at 1.11 as Christ the Obedient Righteous One of God, corresponding to his understanding of the readers as righteous obedient ones. The writer works this out in a double way; on the one hand for the suffering righteous ones the gospel is proof of God's vindication of his elect, and on the other hand it is those who suffer righteously whom God vindicates. In this way the writer does justice to the question of continuity in the tradition process in relation both to the readers' past experience of the gospel and to their continued adherence to it in face of opposition. He also does justice to the question of contemporaneity/actuality, interpreting and adapting the gospel to meet the present need of the readers. And the readers, in obedience to this gospel, are summoned to learn its truth and discover its relevance in their life and conduct.

Chapter six draws some conclusions for the church's proclamation in the present time. In the tension between continuity and contemporaneity, it is suggested that one should not simply polarise tradition and experiment as if what is tradition is something always to be avoided and to look for new departures every time. The giving of traditional answers may in fact be helpful, always provided that they have been freshly arrived at i.e. provided that real learning and renewed understanding have taken place. Where no traditional answer seems possible or helpful, it is suggested that the church must adopt a venturesome faith in which knowledge is to be seen not as the precondition of involvement but its consequence. Finally it is suggested that there is a need for a more theological as opposed to a purely Christological dimension to the question since the tension between continuity and contemporaneity inherent in tradition is so often felt at the point of the church's involvement in what she believes to be God's world.

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CHAPTER ONE

This study of tradition in a Biblical perspective was prompted for the writer by a two-fold interest. Firstly tradition has become a subject of increasing importance in the on-going dialogue of the Ecumenical Movement, mainly in the form of the relation of Scripture to tradition, but also because tradition itself, both of a theological and non-theological nature, has been seen to be at work in all manner of discussions and enquiries. As the Faith and Order Conference on tradition at Montreal 1963 puts it, "every theological study commission has our topic on its agenda."¹ As the mode of conversation of the various churches involved in the World Council moved, especially after Lund 1952, from simply a rehearsing of established positions to a critical examination of them, the subject of tradition was bound to arise and was in fact investigated more fully, leading up to the Montreal Conference. In this process, the entry of the Orthodox churches especially after New Delhi 1961 also had a profound effect in summoning Protestantism to reassess the role and importance of tradition.

Secondly, the place and importance of tradition is rendered acute from an awareness of living in a time whose chief characteristic seems to be change. Paradoxically it is at times of change or disruption that one becomes aware of tradition and its influence and such awareness is born of the very factors which threaten tradition. It is at such moments of threatened dislocation

1 Final Report to the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal 1963. Tradition and Traditions - F. and O. Paper 40, Geneva 1963.

or disorientation that tradition is both keenly felt and keenly questioned, and the church is as much involved in this as any other human institution. For the church it becomes a pressing matter when in coping with change she has to continue to transmit the gospel, the Tradition par excellence;¹ but a Tradition which is nonetheless inevitably tied up with traditions of various kinds, ranging from structural forms of organisation to social and cultural mores. In this kind of situation one may discover that certain very cherished traditions felt to be integral to the gospel are really superfluous and dispensable, but it can be a painful process.

As an object of study, tradition in itself presents certain initial problems which are not always easily overcome: a) there is the problem of vagueness - what exactly is tradition, can we possibly encompass it within a definition? e.g. "what the church knows of Christ"² or, from an existentialist point of view, "Tradition ist ein Vergangenheit und Gegenwart zur Einheit verbindendes, als geschichtlicher Zusammenhang fort dauerndes Geschehen",³ alongside the "usual" concepts such as customs generally, the collections of sayings, hymnic and credal fragments and so on; b) there is the problem of all pervasiveness and the realisation that we are all, in one way or another, involved in tradition of one sort or another. The question then becomes one of how we can "extricate" ourselves in order to gain a perspective on tradition. Although we always speak out of one tradition or another we must yet operate some kind

1 Tradition and Traditions p.16ff.

2 R.P.C. Hanson Origen's Doctrine of Tradition London 1954, p.31.

3 G. Ebeling Die Geschichtlichkeit der Kirche und ihrer Verkündigung als theologisches Problem Tübingen 1954, p.33.

of control mechanism on it in order to examine it critically;

c) there is the problem of diversity which seems to operate in two ways: 1) tradition is diverse in terms of plurality so that there are many traditions. Thus strictly speaking one is not the product of tradition but of traditions, one's background is made up of a variety of traditions, intellectual, social etc. And then again, 2) tradition is diverse in terms of its own inner complexity so that the deeper one penetrates tradition, or any one tradition, the more one encounters an inner diversity. The problem is to do justice to this also, without lapsing into incoherence or becoming swamped.

It is therefore in recognising that tradition is something exceedingly complex that this perspective on it is put forward as a very modest contribution, and the indefinite article in the title "A Biblical Perspective on Tradition" is given its full weight. As a perspective it is concerned primarily with the gospel understood as tradition, the message of Christ and indeed Christ himself handed on from place to place and from age to age. It is this understanding of tradition, as kerygma, with which much ecumenical thinking has been concerned in the New Testament.¹ As a perspective it is also concerned with an understanding of the gospel in a particular context - thus "the traditionary process is best understood by observing it in action in those actual situations where it is a vector in the church's survival, renewal or reform."² It

1 K. Skydsgaard "Tradition as an Issue in Contemporary Theology" in Old and New in the Church, W.C.C. report on Faith and Order, Paper 34 London 1961, 20-35. "The Tradition in its last and deepest meaning is the once-for-all self-giving of God in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ" p.30.

2 Tradition and Traditions p.24.

is at just such an existential crisis point that we can locate
1 Peter.

Before, however, going on to examine this more fully, it may be worthwhile to set out some of the problems and discussion concerning tradition raised by Catholic and Protestant exegesis. Much of this discussion has centred on the question of the rise of Catholicism within the New Testament period and has been associated with such scholars as Käsemann and Diem on the one hand and Schlier and Küng on the other. The debate has inevitably pulled into its orbit the question, roughly speaking, of the relation between gospel freedom and church tradition, and has centred on the relation of Paul to tradition and Paul to the later church of the Pastoral and General Epistles. It is of interest to note that some of this debate forms part of the background to the Montreal Conference on tradition.¹

Protestantism having been forced to take seriously the extent and variety of tradition within Scripture itself, has also been forced to "push back" the time at which "Catholicism" began to develop.² The Reformers returned to the early church leaving out the Middle Ages as a time of decline, and then the decline was

1 J.M. Robinson "Confessional Hermeneutics", Ec. Rev. 3 (1966), 36-56. E. Käsemann "Unity and multiplicity in the New Testament Doctrine of the Church" in New Testament Questions of Today London 1969, 252-9, being his address to the Conference. Also G. Ebeling's study for the Conference "Sola Scriptura and Tradition" in The Word of God and Tradition London 1960, 102-47. Cf. H. Küng's "Early Catholicism in the New Testament as a Problem in Controversial Theology" in The Living Church London 1963, 233-293, which, however, belongs to the wider ecumenical debate on Catholicism in the New Testament generally; transl. of "Der Frühkatholizismus im N.T. als kontroverstheologisches Problem" T.Q. 142 (1962), 385-424. It takes up Käsemann's essay "The Canon of the New Testament and the Unity of the Church" in Essays on New Testament Themes, 95-107. 3rd Im. res., London 1968.

2 Küng "Early Catholicism" 233ff. Cf. generally L. Cerfaux "Les Deux Points de Départ de la Tradition" Recueil L. Cerfaux ii Gembloux 1954, 253-263.

supposed to have set in after the Five Ecumenical Councils, or again further back still with the turn of the first century. Now apparently it may be located within the New Testament itself. Catholic scholars, especially with the impetus given to Scriptural study after Pius XII's encyclical of 1943 "Divino afflante Spiritu", have been quick to seize the findings of Protestant scholars here and to argue that a Catholic decline from an evangelical beginning is a myth, since Catholicism has existed "ab initio". Catholicism, however, has also been forced to take seriously the operation of the Spirit in the tradition process, the remarkable freedom and spontaneity in the New Testament, the paradox that the Spirit ensures continuity but can never be bound to it or enslaved by the process itself - in this sense tradition is not only inheritance but confrontation.¹

E. Käsemann in an influential article² which lies at the centre of the subsequent discussion, launches a two-fold argument ostensibly against the uncritical use of "sola Scriptura" as a legal maxim but with wider implications for the subject of tradition generally: a) he takes seriously the tremendous diversity within the New Testament itself so that any and every church confession may appeal with equal authority to Scripture for support. The principle of "sola Scriptura" appears to founder on the very variety of its content. In face of this problem and the apparent helplessness of the exegete, he reaffirms the Reformers' own distinction between

1 For a history of tradition in Catholic thought, see Y. Congar La Tradition et les Traditions, Paris, 1960; J.P. Mackey The Modern Theology of Tradition, London, 1962.

2 Above Page 4, Note 1: "The Canon of the New Testament and the Unity of the Church".

gospel and canon, calling for a task of "discerning the spirits". In this, of course, Käsemann does not seek to deny the primacy of Scripture but rather to emphasize the Reformers' understanding of it with a directness not generally admitted by Protestantism;

b) this "discerning of the spirits" inevitably involves one, unless one is content to hold together what seem to be irreconcilable contradictions, e.g. Paul and James, in establishing some kind of development, or in Käsemann's case decline, towards Catholicism, which with the movement of history smooths over the contradictions into a unified whole. Protestantism has been as open to this in its understanding of Scripture as Catholicism generally. This is especially clear in the difference between Paul and the subsequent period culminating in 2 Peter, Jude (see also the Pastorals).

There, in defence against gnostic tendencies, the church established the gospel as a fixed deposit, in which the Spirit is now dissolved into the tradition with an authorised body in charge of the correct interpretation of it. Käsemann in a critique of 2 Peter puts it quite bluntly; "what have we to say about a church, which is so concerned to defend herself against heretics, that she no longer distinguishes between Spirit and letter; that she identifies the Gospel with her own tradition and, further, with a particular religious world-view; that she regulates exegesis according to her system of teaching authority and makes faith into a mere assent to the dogmas of orthodoxy?"¹

Käsemann no doubt recognises the inevitability of such a development, the gathering and preserving of tradition as a

1 "An Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology" in Essays on New Testament Themes, 169-195. cf. W. Marxsen Der Fröhenkatholizismus' im Neuen Testament Neukirchen 1958 p.7ff; K. Schelkle Die Petrusbriefe - Der Judasbrief Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament Freiburg 1964.

depositum, and even that nevertheless "it goes without saying that in an outlook of this kind some of the primitive Christian motifs are retained".¹ Paul also saw himself "as the embodiment of the Gospel", but now "the correlation of Apostle and Gospel is replaced in 2 Peter by the correlation of Apostle and the church's doctrinal tradition".² On the whole, one detects that for Käsemann such a development is a regrettable decline from the greatness of Paul and that it is regrettable especially just in that loss of freedom and openness for the gospel which is at the heart of Protestantism.³

The real question which presents itself here, of course, is how Paul understood tradition, especially in 1 Corinthians, in relation to his gospel and his Apostleship and what he says in Gal. 1, 11-12. H. Schlier,⁴ from a Roman Catholic point of view, defines the tradition Paul possessed as a fixed kerygma, as an authorised deposit of truth, and hence the outcome in 2 Peter is quite logical and correct. This is just as emphatically rejected by U. Wilckens⁵ as an understanding of Paul's gospel, and he argues that one cannot use a later time such as the early Catholicism of the Pastoral and

1 "An Apologia" p.175

2 "An Apologia" p.176

3 Käsemann, as he puts it, "New Testament Canon", p.106, is not seeking "to ignore tradition for the sake of the Spirit", but only to make a distinction between the continuity of divine action and human tradition. But it is just here that one encounters difficulty since the divine continuity is mediated only through the human. Cf. Ebeling's critique of Käsemann in The Word of God and Tradition, "The New Testament and the Multiplicity of Confessions", 148-59.

4 "Kerygma und Sophia" in Die Zeit der Kirche, Freiburg 1958, 206-32.

5 "Kreuz und Weisheit" in K. und D. 3 (1957), 77-108.

General Epistles to interpret 1 Cor. Again one senses in the Protestant approach an eagerness to preserve Paul's freedom. But it may run the danger, in not adequately dealing with the place of tradition in the gospel, of lapsing into the very enthusiasm Paul sought to correct, and presumably also, later on, the writer of 2 Peter, in seeing the gospel as a "depositum". We shall, of course, have to consider 1 Cor. generally in dealing with the image of the child as it occurs at 3.1 etc., but here we may at least note a possible intermediate position in which Paul is neither wholly independent of tradition as regards his proclamation of the gospel, nor wholly indebted to it either. Moreover, at 2 Peter, 2.21 (cf. 3.1 ff, Jude 3), such a fixing of tradition could be understood simply as a response to a threat against the gospel, which is not nevertheless a denial of freedom, even though the temptation to traditionalism on the part of the church is a correspondingly great one.¹

H. Diem,² a fellow Protestant, criticises Käsemann's point of view in that while certainly recognising the variety and diversity of tradition within the New Testament, it does not do justice to the Canon as such and to its finality. Because of the Canon as such, one must retain its whole witness, even though at times certain witnesses tend to recede in favour of others, and we cannot therefore downgrade or ignore any part of it on the criterion of another part. One is sympathetic to this point of view, except that Diem tries to lessen the tension by locating the emergence of "Catholicism"

1 See N.A. Dahl "Anamnesis" Stud. Theol. 1 (1947), 69-95 esp.p.75ff.

2 Dogmatics, Edinburgh 1959, p.229ff.

in the post-canonical period, and this, as Käsemann rightly acknowledges, seems no longer justifiable historically. Küng¹ in his critique of Käsemann recognises that there are many insights here which one may welcome, but pulls up short just on this matter of doing justice to the diversity of Scripture and of how one may obtain a comprehensive view of it. He criticises both Diem and Käsemann in the Protestant camp on the grounds that any attempt to be selective leads to a reduction ultimately of the unity of the church - Diem must also be selective, he claims, in actual practice even if he rejects it as a principle. Küng recognises that while the diversity of the Canon can give rise to and occasion church diversity, it is not strictly its cause. Rather that lies in choice, "nothing less than the abandonment, fundamentally, of catholicity in the understanding of Scripture in favour of heresy".² "The actual cause of the multitude of confessions is not the Canon of the New Testament - which, understood in a "catholic" way (kath' holou) is a basic condition for the unity of the ekklesia - but hairesis, which dissolves the unity of the ekklesia."³ It would, of course, take us too far afield to enter this whole debate on early Catholicism in the New Testament and examine fully Küng's reply, but if we may here call on another Protestant voice, that of Ebeling,⁴ what he says by way of criticising Käsemann may equally apply to Küng, in that the connections both seem to make

1 "Early Catholicism" pp.233-93

2 "Early Catholicism" p.261

3 "Early Catholicism" pp.261-2

4 "The Multiplicity of Confessions" p.152ff.

between contemporary confessions and the "confessional differences" within the Canon really amount to an oversimplification. Thus "the existence of a Confession is in itself far too complicated a structure of traditions to be derived simply from an appeal to specific passages of Scripture",¹ (cf. the importance of non-theological factors in theological discussion recognised by Montreal). It is therefore somewhat unfair of K  ng to introduce here such a difficult thing as "heresy", quite apart from the question a Protestant might well put in reply as to whether Catholicism itself does justice to the "catholicity" of Scripture.

Although, as we have said, we cannot go into the many questions which are raised, such as the wider problem of Scripture and tradition, the authority of the church (as K  ng's reply makes clear) and so on, it does show the tension which is inherently part of tradition itself, namely between conservation and freedom. As we have considered it, the tension has been drawn along confessional lines; between Protestant freedom - K  semann's concern is a practical one, to allow the gospel scope to confront the church, and to free it from (a typically Protestant) legalistic understanding of Scripture which imprisons God within it; and Catholic conservation of the wholeness of the tradition received, fearing (not always wrongly) that such Protestant freedom can become arbitrary individualism and lead to fragmentation.

The problem however cannot be kept in this kind of compartmentalised form, since it runs through all church confessions and is a problem both for Protestantism and for Catholicism. As

1 "The Multiplicity of Confessions" p.152

Käsemann has shown, it is easy for Protestantism, so keen to uphold the place of the gospel, to stifle it in its very clinging to the primacy of Scripture, but more pressingly, Protestantism for all its claim to "sola Scriptura" has been itself heavily traditional and at times very conservative. The question which faces Protestantism today is how to allow the gospel to speak, encased as it is in the thought-forms of another day and age. How can so traditional a church, for instance, as that in Scotland, do justice to the "semper reformanda" demanded by the gospel? Tradition for Protestantism can no longer remain at the level of "Menschen-satzungen" over against Scripture, but since tradition has existed from the beginning, it belongs to the whole heritage of the gospel, and consequently brings with it this tension of preservation and freedom. So also Catholicism which preserves the wholeness of tradition received, through a renewed emphasis on Biblical criticism has rediscovered the importance of the Holy Spirit and the dynamism of the gospel in the tradition process. Thus, on this side also, one may detect a tension between preservation and change, and may even ask whether the Catholic church leaves itself sufficiently open to a confrontation with the Spirit over against its traditional understanding.

This tension in tradition of freedom and continuity raises two closely connected problems in terms of the relation of the Spirit to what is handed on: a) in view of change and identity "what", as Ebeling puts it, "is really the essential element for Christian faith, and what is really the continuing 'traditio tradenda', if this is, on the one hand, Holy Spirit and not "the letter", although no Holy Spirit without "the letter"?"¹ b) in view of change and identity,

1 "Multiplicity of Confessions" p.158

or again as Ebeling puts it, "change and persistence"¹ which are inherent in tradition "das Beieinander von Veränderung und Beharrung"¹ how are we to understand this paradox of the Spirit as both ensuring continuity in the tradition process and as creative of fresh insight and breaking new ground? What is the relation between responsibility to guard what has been received and freedom to respond to the present?

In examining these interlocking problems further, it may be helpful to consider briefly some views of New Testament scholars, both Catholic and Protestant. It is the merit of these scholars that they try to come to grips with the essential element in the tradition as the handing on of the gospel message, e.g. its being bound to the activity of the Spirit within the church (cf. Skydsgaard², Geiselman, von Campenhausen and also Cullmann), or that as tradition it is also demand, e.g. the gospel of Jesus Christ (objective genitive) is "his" gospel (subjective genitive) in which the hearer finds himself addressed by the Word, and is confronted with a summons "to repent and believe" (Schlier and Bultmann). These scholars also attempt to take seriously the question of meaningfulness, the dialectic of continuity and freedom in tradition which characterises its true nature.

Geiselman,³ as we have noted, links the gospel as tradition to the operation of the Spirit. He notes both the surprising

1 Die Geschlichkeit p.31

2 "Scripture and Tradition" S.J.T. 9 (1956), 337-358; esp.p.352ff; "Tradition as an Issue in Contemporary Theology" in Old and New in the Church, 20ff.

3 The Meaning of Tradition, Quaestiones Disputatae 15, Freiburg 1966.

variety and freedom of interpretation in the early church and also its care for the transmission of the gospel. This freedom "is based on and supported by the operation of the Holy Spirit within the domain of the church and therefore in the paradosis itself."¹ This Geiselman links to a particularly Catholic view that "the 'now', the perpetually rendering present of Jesus' words in the church's paradosis, requires an intelligent reception and transmission of apostolic tradition, behind which there stands the operation of the Holy Spirit who makes a tradition a living doctrinal substance which is to be preserved from falsification and disintegration and subjected to an historical process of ever more profound understanding within the church".² In this there is much that a Protestant should welcome, especially the living vitality of tradition, and its corollary, the need of understanding in the tradition process as opposed to a mere learning by rote, tradition which remains on the level of historical data without relevance to life as such, what Ebeling calls "Überlieferung" in distinction from "Tradition".³ Geiselman also incidentally reveals his roots in the change from a static to a dynamic understanding of tradition which occurred in the 19th century, with a stress on a Catholic "wholeness", associated chiefly with Newman and Möhler, connected also, like Geiselman, with Tübingen.⁴

1 The Meaning of Tradition p.12

2 The Meaning of Tradition pp.12-13

3 Die Geschichtlichkeit der Kirche p.32. See E. Dinkler "Tradition" R.G.G. Dritte Auf. VI p.971.

4 See Congar La Tradition p.244ff.

More particularly however, one questions here the idea of tradition as something preserved from falsification, that heresy is "outlawed" from the start, and is it indeed the case that the church always shows an "ever more profound understanding", cf. 2 Peter 3.16? Geiselman seems so to guarantee the tradition process by the operation of the Spirit within the church that he minimises the risk always attendant upon interpretation and application of the tradition.

Von Campenhausen, in a balanced essay,¹ also connects the tradition with the work of the Holy Spirit, paying attention both to the need of response to it as well as responsibility for it and also to the possibility, ever present, of misinterpretation. "A falling away from its origins and a betrayal of them are possibilities that threaten constantly ----",² and the church must always therefore be "testing the spirits"³ (cf. Käsemann⁴). "Holding fast to what has been handed down and interpreting it in a living, understanding fashion must always go hand in hand; there is no genuine preservation of tradition without the freedom and responsibility of the spirit that expounds and judges, and thereby guards the original".⁵ It is of course just here, whether such freedom is always a guarding of the tradition, that tension arises, although there is no true preservation without freedom of response. By

1 "Tradition and Spirit in Early Christianity" in Tradition and Life in the Church London 1968, 7-18.

2 "Tradition and Spirit" p.13.

3 "Tradition and Spirit" p.13.

4 "The New Testament Canon" p.104.

5 "Tradition and Spirit" p.16.

way of criticism, one feels that von Campenhausen is oversimplifying matters in talking of the "pure tradition"¹ or a kind of deposit given at the beginning. Rather the very diversity of tradition makes this difficult, and perhaps there never existed one tradition in the beginning, an "ur-Kerygma", but many, all understanding in their own way the Christ event. One notes however two important conclusions which he draws:² a) that the church must always be not only claiming to have the Spirit and to interpret tradition correctly, but testing this; and b) that the Spirit and not the church is the true judge - "truth must vindicate its right; such vindication cannot be eluded by those who appeal to the truth".³

As we have seen especially with Käsemann and the contrast between freedom in the gospel and traditionalism, in this whole subject Paul plays an important part, and especially the question of how he understands his gospel in relation to traditions he has received.⁴ Cullmann from a Protestant point of view, in an examination of Paul, connects tradition closely with the divine activity within the church, especially the risen and glorified Lord. Arguing from 1 Cor. 11.23 and the *ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου* (not the more usual *παρὰ*), he develops the idea of *Kurios* as the designation

1 "Tradition and Spirit" p.13.

2 "Tradition and Spirit" pp.17-18.

3 "Tradition and Spirit" p.18.

4 On this generally see P. Fannon "The influence of Tradition on Paul" *T. u. U.* 102, *Stud.Evang.* 4, 292-307; K. Wengst "Der Apostel und die Tradition" *Z.T.K.* 2 (1972) 145-62 and the bibliographies cited there; cf. E. Dinkler "Tradition" *R.G.G.* VI, 974.

of the (oral) tradition developing itself within the church.¹

So also with Christ handing himself on, acting in the witness of the apostles and giving to the tradition a continuing power as revelation, the Christian receives Christ in adhering to it.

Cullmann finds support at Col. 2.6 and in this way attempts to find both continuity and relevance for the present in tradition.

In this, however, one feels that he is open to the same kind of criticism as Geiselmann, in that he combines too closely Christ and tradition so that it becomes difficult to do justice to the possibility of the tradition being "falsely" developed.² Granted that *Kurios* at 1 Cor. 11.23 is not the earthly Jesus but the exalted Lord, present to the church in power, is this the real point behind "*καὶ τοῦ κυρίου*"? It would seem very likely that in view of the Corinthians' own enthusiasm they would endorse the view of the tradition as being itself divinely inspired. Rather what is at stake is the correct understanding of the tradition and Paul's authority to impart and interpret it over against what was for him a misunderstanding and abuse of it. Cullmann, by identifying too much Christ and the tradition does not pay enough attention to the question of the interpretation and understanding of the gospel in the tradition process which underlies Paul's struggle at Corinth. So also at Col. 2.6, one feels that this refers not to receiving

1 "The Tradition" in The Early Church, London 1956, 56-99.
See also "Kurios as Designation for the Oral Tradition Concerning Jesus" in S.J.T. 3 (1950), 180-197. Sequel "Scripture and Tradition" S.J.T. 6 (1953), 113-135.

2 The problem raised by Käsemann, "The New Testament Canon" p.106, between divine continuity and human traditions.

the Lord as one who hands himself on, but to a correct understanding of the tradition, namely that Christ is indeed Lord and not some kind of intermediary being. It is on the whole difficult to know what one means by "receiving Christ" independent of interpretation and application in definite contexts.

Schlier¹ for his part, many of whose insights Geiselman uses in a wider theological context, does recognise that it is a matter of Christological understanding conveyed in the tradition which is behind Paul's controversy with the Corinthians. Thus it is a matter of the correct interpretation of the kerygma and the authority of Paul to impart it over against the Corinthians' sophisticated understanding. So also in this Schlier, like Cullmann, attempts to do justice to tradition both as something received and as of living relevance for the present. Underlying much of his argument one senses a grappling with this issue, rendered urgent by his Catholic stance but with deep knowledge of Protestantism prior to his conversion.

For Schlier, tradition is located in the confessional formulae of faith. Thus at 1 Cor. 15.1ff, the resurrected Christ reveals himself to the apostles, and this becomes enshrined as revelation in their confession of him. It is in effect kerygmatic tradition so that in this confession is the ever new self-revelation of the risen Lord to the hearers. This kerygma as the normative apostolic tradition is fixed and defined, and lies above all human control in its absolute authority. Faith in it cannot be questioning but only believing acceptance. As such it is even the

1 "Kerygma und Sophia" p.206ff; cf. G. Ebeling Theology and Proclamation London 1966, pp.120-123.

source of the gospel itself; preaching is the development of the truth it contains. As such as kerygma, it stands over against all human wisdom and endeavour. In this the Catholic concept of authority and the decisiveness of its doctrine backed up by the Magisterium is heavy indeed. But does this therefore mean the end of enquiry and of wisdom? Not at all, Schlier answers, for there is a wisdom which stems from the revelation proclaimed in the kerygma which points man to a true understanding of himself and the world, but as faith in the proffered kerygma, and not (contra Bultmann) as decision to accept his personal self-understanding. In this way of establishing the kerygma as a fixed deposit, Schlier locates the origin of dogma, and also of truth and wisdom only in its explication - "keine Erkenntnis der Wahrheit gibt ohne das Dogma".¹

In much of this, especially his understanding of the kerygma, one finds it difficult to follow Schlier, despite his attempt to grapple with tradition as something involving continuity and adaptation. Thus it is difficult to see this tradition as something verbally constant and sacrosanct, even if something traditional is quoted, and indeed at 1 Cor. 15.8, Paul freely adds to it his own experience. It is also difficult to allow that such a fixed deposit goes back to the resurrected Christ who gives it to the apostles, giving the kerygma a "divine" status. The relation between Christ and the kerygma, the gospel as tradition which is handed on, is a close one, but as we have seen before, we cannot identify them as if we could capture the whole of what Christ

1 "Kerygma und Sophia" p.232.

means.¹ Rather, Christ is Lord of all understandings of him and portrayals of the gospel meaning, nor can we accord to human statements and to the tradition itself a finality as if we had understood all that had to be said - no one, in other words, can lay claim to the tradition in its fullness, but can only more or less approximate to it as he understands it in his own time and context.

U. Wilckens², in his critique of Schlier's thesis, makes a valuable point which one may extend to much of this kerygma-centred discussion of tradition generally. Wilckens criticises Schlier³ for ignoring the God-ward dimension of Paul's apostleship, so that it is not a matter simply of the self-revelation of the Resurrected One, cf. Gal. 1.12, 15ff and also Rom. 10.17 as objective and not subjective genitive; so also at 1 Cor. 15.10, God and not Christ is the originator of Paul's apostleship. This, we should note, has real importance over against an all too common tendency to centre the discussion upon Christ and how he hands himself on, as the real point of the tradition. Even Montreal perhaps tends to neglect the God-ward dimension of the tradition. The result is that one ends up with a "Christ-God", a theology which is seen wholly as a Christology. To rediscover the God-ward dimension of the tradition is of great help in dealing with the paradox of continuity, of freedom/adaptation inherent in tradition, and to

1 See A.A. van Ruler "The Evolution of Dogma" in Christianity Divided Ed. D.J. Callahan and Others, London 1962, 89-105, esp. p.100ff. For a forceful statement of this at a time of crisis when being tried for heresy by the Church of Scotland see Memorials of John MacLeod Campbell by his Son. London 1877 I, 82.

2 "Kreuz und Weisheit" See above p.7 Note 5.

3 "Kreuz und Weisheit" pp.100-101.

this we shall return presently.

Finally, by way of concluding this quick survey of attitudes to tradition on the part of a variety of scholars, we may consider Bultmann. At first glance he may seem an unlikely witness for a perspective on tradition; thus with regard to the Old Testament, Christ as the end of the Law is the end of history. "The contemporaneity of the saving event accomplished in him (i.e. Christ) is not mediated through the continuous 'Volkesgeschichte' and through the tradition which both accompanies and forms a constituent part of that history".¹ On the other hand, Bultmann also notes "that there never was a 'gospel' without 'tradition'"² - tradition here, however, is intimately linked to the gospel as God's Word. Thus because of God's eschatological act in Christ in which history itself has come to an end, tradition cannot be the handing on of historical phenomena, or of fixed deposits of information, but is rather the constantly renewed proclamation of Christ in which God confronts the hearer in judgment and grace. Bultmann also, like Geiselmann, albeit in a rather different way, does full justice to tradition as something communal; the church is itself constituted by this Word and is "the community of this proclamation".³ Consequently it is not tradition in the ethnic sense which holds the church together as community, as it was for Israel, but Tradition as God's Word in Christ which summons to obedience and faith.

1 "The Significance of the Old Testament for the Christian Faith" p.30 in The Old Testament and Christian Faith Ed. B.W. Anderson, London 1964, 8-35.

2 New Testament Theology, Vol.2, p.98. London 1955.

3 "Significance of the Old Testament" p.31.

In this, Bultmann certainly emphasises tradition as something which is alive and of relevance for the present, but at the cost perhaps of removing the element of continuity, of dissolving the gospel as tradition into a series of existential encounters. We may illustrate this from two examples in 1 Peter itself: a) the description of the gospel at 1.11 of Christ as "the suffering and subsequently glorified one" comes from a whole background of the suffering Righteous One of God and speaks from that context, i.e. along with the existential decision to respond to the Word, the Word itself comes not "naked" but clothed with a whole understanding and context and speaks out of a definite tradition; b) is Bultmann's view really adequate in face of the appeal to experience which the writer makes at 2.3 ἐγεύσασθε(cf. Heb. 6.5), and the way in which present summons is linked to the word which had been brought to them and which had brought them into being? What is the relation between first hearing the gospel and being baptised, and subsequent hearings in which the Christian is ever anew confronted with God's demand - is there any continuity? For the writer, it would seem that the past experience of the readers is of importance, and is something which does not detract from God's present summons and its decisiveness now, but which positively enhances it and increases its urgency.

Thus far, we have been attempting to raise some of the problems of tradition, understood primarily as the gospel message as it has been handed on, in relation to some of the views expressed by a variety of scholars. In particular we have been concerned with the paradox which is inherent in tradition of continuity and of interpretation/adaptation, the combination according to Ebeling, as we have noted, of change and persistence. This is something which

seems to have been inherent from the beginning in the church's understanding of the gospel as tradition. Thus, despite the use of tradition terminology, there is a freedom about the church's use of tradition, summed up by Bornkamm - "the word of Jesus is preserved, and yet not with the piety of an archivist, nor is it passed on like the utterances of famous rabbis with expositions attached. In fact, one can go on to say this: the tradition is not really the repetition of the word he spoke once upon a time, but rather is his word today".¹ So also one may detect within the New Testament itself something of a hermeneutic process in which themes and concepts may be changed or developed to counteract a misunderstanding or to meet a need.² In this the church does not sit loose to the facts, so to speak, but neither does she preserve them as in a museum, but rather constantly seeks to bring out their eschatological meaning; she must be both faithful to what she has received and yet creatively responsive to new situations. In this sense tradition is always ultimately proclamation.

For man's existence in history, both tradition and freedom are necessary, since he lives neither "de novo" but always in the context of what he has received, nor yet as a puppet devoid of freedom and responsibility towards it. In this sense the tradition received sets boundaries to freedom, but nevertheless allows freedom a creative scope to respond to it, and to contribute in a

1 Jesus of Nazareth, 2nd impress., London 1966, p. 17

2 See J.M. Robinson "Confessional Hermeneutics", Ec.Rev. 3, p.36ff. Also more extensively, J.M. Robinson and H. Koester Trajectories through Early Christianity Philadelphia 1971.

creative manner to the tradition process. In view of this, the question may always and should always be asked, "what is the relevance now of what has been handed on from others?", what is the meaningfulness of tradition? One can avoid one's responsibility in the present by giving traditional answers, but is this not one point at least at which tradition becomes traditionalism, allowing the answers and findings of others to apply to situations which are quite different and about which they did not know? This perhaps is exemplified by those who avoided the radical demand of the Baptist by appealing to Abraham as their father (Matt. 3.9). In this we may also note that heresy may not always be kept away by a simple reciting of the tradition. Thus, e.g., Koester arrives at a working definition of heresy¹ that it is a failure to take seriously the Cross, and therefore the historicity of man's existence. This means for him that one can never maintain orthodoxy by reciting tradition to avoid heresy, because this in effect is heresy, to apply to the present the answers of another age and so not take seriously the Christian revelation in face of the present. Because the gospel is not a series of timeless truths or a static set of immutable propositions, constant interpretation of the tradition cannot be sacrificed in case of the possibility of misinterpretation. In this, one has some sympathy for Morris West's "The Heretic"² -

1 "Theological Aspects of Primitive Christian Heresy" in The Future of our Religious Past Essays in honour of R. Bultmann, ed. J.M. Robinson, London 1971, 65-83.

2 The Heretic - a Play in Three Acts London 1970.

"How stand I, measured by the creeds, tradition --

----- I claim

No private lien on the truth, only

A liberty to seek it, prove it in debate,

And to be wrong a thousand times to reach

A single rightness."

On the other hand, it can also be irresponsible to be iconoclastic about tradition, to denounce it altogether and to seek to cut oneself loose from the past. One runs the risk then of becoming wholly subjective and arbitrary, with a resultant possible crisis of identity. This kind of unbridled freedom which seeks to do justice to the present is really non-responsible to it, as if the present and oneself existed without a context. Moreover, a careful appraisal of tradition in terms of its variety of content may help one to arrive at an imaginative answer in the present.¹

It is this involvement of tradition, and with it that of response and freedom, in man's historical existence which makes tradition something dynamic, an integral part of life. It is against this background that we would wish to consider the image of the child, with particular reference to 1 Peter 2.1ff, since the child offers us a perspective on life and therefore on tradition as living and dynamic. The child is placed, as it were, in a "learning situation", at that point in the tradition process of receiving the tradition, and of assimilating its content and meaning in a particular context; and this not in the scholastic

1 Paul's question at 1 Cor. 4.7 "what have you that you have not received?" is always a decisive one.

sense of memorising a deposit, but in terms of the tradition as proclamation and address, and whose understanding is applied to life and worked out in a definite situation. As such, as tradition, it becomes constitutive of life and existence, along with response to it and creative application of its meaning.

If we may briefly explore this point about tradition (as gospel message) as dynamic, then the following things seem worth mentioning:

a) The tradition as God's eschatological address is proclamation, but it is proclamation of something and is mediated through particular concepts and beliefs. It is in short not a bare encounter but received through all the particularities of human understanding and description, even when as God's address it is spontaneously creative (cf. 1 Peter 1.3, 1.23 (2.2) ἀναγεννᾶν). As such, as something received as part of an on-going process, it is not a private encounter as if it belonged only to oneself. Rather through the continuity involved it is something shared with many (Ps. 78. 1-6, cf. 1 Peter 1.10,12, 5.9).

b) Through response to the gospel handed on, one becomes involved in it through acceptance, so that in a real sense one makes it one's own and it informs one's life - the tradition "actualises" itself (so Geiselmann¹). There is therefore a close relationship between one's life and one's understanding of the tradition received; this is made clear on the one hand by the

1 The Meaning of Tradition p. 93. "Continuity and actuality are the two poles around which religious tradition swings." Note at 1 Cor. 15.1 in which Paul cites tradition, the close relation between "tradition" language and faith, belief in proclamation - παρέδοκα-εὐηγγελίσασμεν. παρελάβετε-ἐπιστεύσατε

theme of following Christ in the gospels or of imitation, as in Paul and 1 Peter, in which the experiences of Christ become true, are actualised in the life of the believer; and on the other hand by the failure, as in 1 Cor., to lead a true life which reflects a failure to understand what has been imparted. There is a close connection between the gospel received and the baptismal life.

c) **The** gospel message handed on does not cease to be an ever-renewed and fresh address as one listens to it, but since it involved my having responded to it initially, the obligation to hear it anew involves the responsibility of having heard and responded to it then. So often in the New Testament, especially in the epistles, it is a matter of recalling what has already been received - the readers already know the kerygma so that the gospel as proclamation is very much a recalling to enable them to live better in the reality they have already received.¹ Thus, through entry upon the tradition, being a part of it, there exists a continuity not only in the gospel as it is handed on, but in the Christian life itself as the sphere in which the response to the gospel is worked out. (Cf. Heb. 6.4ff., 1 Pet. 2.2 in relation to 1.12ff, 1.22ff, etc.)

However, as we have already said, the gospel as tradition is proclamation in which God confronts the hearer and summons him to faith and obedience. The church, therefore, as bearer of the gospel

1 N.A. Dahl "Anamnesis" p.69ff.

can never be "a community of nostalgia"¹ nor hold on to the tradition as if it were a fixed and rigid depositum. Rather she must exercise her freedom creatively, in response to what has been received, to apply it and understand it in successive ages. What does this mean?

a) It means that there is always an element of risk in the tradition process, a freedom which does not reject what has been received, but which is open to apply it to the needs of the present and to seek new ways of understanding it. Thus the response is always a creative response, faith is "venturesome faith".²

b) In this one needs to recover the wider theological dimension of the gospel as tradition (cf. Wilckens), which may correct an excessive stress on Christ as the tradition's content, handing himself on from age to age. Thus one may avoid a kind of "Jesus-ology" in which on the one hand there is the danger of a wholly "humanistic" gospel, which stresses the horizontal to the detriment of the vertical and transcendent dimension; and on the other hand of confining truth to something between the pages of a book as if there was nothing more to be said, that God had "exhausted himself". To recover the concept of God in the tradition process would help the church to come to grips more with the paradox of identity and change, since it is at the point of the church's involvement with the secular, with God's world, that these tensions so often arise.

c) If we must make our own creative response to what has been

1 Priorities of Mission in Scotland in the 1970's Report to the General Assembly in 1971, p.13.

2 cf. A. Galloway Faith in a Changing Culture Kerr Lectures in Glasgow 1966, London 1967, p.65 cf. p.51ff.

received in the context of our own situation in the present, then this also means that nothing is fixed or final in the sense that the definitive statement has been made, not even by ourselves. No one can claim the truth as a possession or claim to possess the tradition; rather in our inevitable historical existence we deal with truth as a matter of emphasis. Thus we may recall von Campenhausen's conclusion that it is not enough to claim to have the truth, not even on the part of the church, but this must always be checked and tested. Some lines of Robert Frost's are here apposite for the Christian -

"He knew a path that wanted walking;
He knew a spring that wanted drinking;
A thought that wanted further thinking;
A love that wanted re-renewing."¹

It is not that we can possess what we have received, but only as we allow ourselves to be addressed by it and creatively respond to it as best we may can we ourselves truly hand it on. In view of this, one is critical of a common diagnosis of the church's current problems which states that the church "has" the truth but is failing to communicate it. Rather, in taking the image of the child as a perspective on tradition, one would suggest that truth is not so much a matter of "having" as of "learning" (cf. John 16.13). Problems of communication may only be symptomatic of a deeper failure to learn and discover truth in venturesomeness and obedience. Consequently in every situation of transition and change in which the

1 "A Lone Striker" in The Complete Poems of Robert Frost London 1951, 301ff.

church is in dialogue both with her tradition and with the world, the relationship beforehand and afterwards is crucial - thus we should always ask "in the on-going proclamation of the gospel which is the church's task, does real learning nevertheless take place?" whether it be the learning of new ways of obedience or the re-learning of past lessons in a fresh way.

By way, therefore, of summing up what has been said thus far, we may look briefly at the use made of the child/understanding image by two writers who deal with the question of coping with change; the one from a theological point of view, A. Galloway,¹ and the other from a sociological point of view, D. Schon.² Galloway uses the child image in an extensive way to illustrate "the healthy relationship between individual autonomy and corporate autonomy in the life of a tradition",³ in which there is a two-way traffic. Thus the child in the family context receives but also is creative, and this not by and large in an arbitrary way. Rather through what Galloway terms the dimension of intentionality, the child continues creatively the intention of the tradition received, and thus the tradition continues to preserve its identity through change. If this breaks down, then it is a case of inner directed choice giving way to chance, leading to tradition and self being polarised and disruption setting in.⁴ One might suggest that another equally

1 Faith in a Changing Culture Kerr Lectures in Glasgow p.57ff.

2 Beyond the Stable State Reith lectures for 1970, expanded; London 1971.

3 Faith in a Changing Culture p.58.

4 Faith in a Changing Culture pp.59-60.

important kind of disruption, continuing the imagery for a moment, would be an oppressive kind of authority, e.g. the father who as the figure head of tradition and custom might prevent the child from exercising his freedom and independence as a person. At any rate, Galloway points out that the dimension of intentionality is all important in the tradition process.

Schon, from a sociological point of view, deals with the question of how in a situation of rapid change and the breakdown of stability, systems can retain a self-identity. He calls for the development of learning systems; in situations which are open-ended "there must be a knowing and learning agent who maintains continuity over the learning process. He must span the period which includes both the experiences underlying his projective models and the "next instances" to which these models are brought. ----- The learning agent must be willing and able to make the leaps required in existential knowledge.----- These are leaps, because they cannot be justified except by what happens after they are made. They are conditions, not consequences, of knowledge."¹

The image of the child in the New Testament brings us very much into the orbit of the ideas expressed by these writers, of continuity with the past and of freedom to adapt to change in the present. As an image widely used in the ancient world, it is integral to the whole process of education, of how something is imparted and understood, how teaching and tradition are assimilated. It also has an "existential urgency" especially in Paul and Hebrews, in the sense that what has been received has not been sufficiently

¹ Beyond the Stable State pp.234-5.

understood and acted upon. Here the image points to discontinuity and disruption in the tradition process either from deliberate misinterpretation (1 Cor.) or from insufficient understanding (Hebrews). In the gospels (Q) and especially Matthew, the description of *ἐκκλησία* is one mainly of consolation that the church possesses the true understanding of God's will in its obedience to Christ, and is very much set against the background of the church's controversy with Judaism.

That we concentrate here on 1 Peter is due to two reasons - certainly not that the other uses are in themselves unimportant or uninteresting:

a) firstly it turns our attention to another kind of dangerous or threatening situation for tradition besides that of heresy and the false development of tradition, namely one of persecution. It is characteristically in times of change or crisis that one becomes conscious of tradition, when something occurs which appears to call it in question. In the former case, that of the danger of falsehood, one finds, as we have seen, a consolidation of the tradition e.g. Jude 3, 2 Peter 1.12 or the setting up of tests in 1 John. In the case of persecution and suffering, this also calls the gospel in question, the ability of what one has received to answer meaningfully a present crisis. And this is rendered more acute when in 1 Peter the gospel received is itself the cause of the trouble, in so far as the readers are Christians and hence marked out from their environment. (Although persecution seems only to be a threat by and large, and there is no hint of actual martyrdom, it is nevertheless a real one for the recipients of the letter.)

Thus in some way the readers are facing a crisis of identity, whether to resort to the traditions and customs of their fathers, 1.18, or to remain within the Christian tradition in which God is their spiritual Father, 1.17; and judging from the author's frequent exhortations to sinlessness and obedience, it seems to have been a real enough crisis;

b) secondly, in 1 Peter the child image has positive rather than negative significance, in contrast to 1 Cor. and Hebrews. It therefore emphasises the existential point at which the tradition is understood and acted upon in an unusual way. If we may briefly summarise some of the later discussion, while Paul, Hebrews and 1 Peter all link baptism in some way to the child image, we should not equate "being a child" with an early stage in the Christian life beyond which one must progress. This link between the child and baptism shows indeed that there is the closest connection between teaching and life, that understanding is something not at all confined to the intellect. However, in Paul and Hebrews, since there is no mention of baptismal regeneration or the like, the child image refers primarily to how the tradition is understood, the contrast being made with the mature or adult person, with the implication that the true understanding of the gospel, and its fulfilment in the life one leads, are the marks of maturity.

1 Peter on the other hand does combine the child image with language of regeneration, and thus emphasises in his own way that tradition has a dynamic quality in the sense of being an essential part of one's life. This may be the inherited traditions which informed the readers' old lives and still inform the lives of their

critics, or the gospel described as "a living hope" 1.3 which both contrasts with the dangers facing them, and also may mean (cf. the language of regeneration) a hope by which to live their lives as Christians (cf. the "living stone" imagery of 2.4ff.)

If, however, the readers can be described as products of the gospel, of tradition, in this way, it does not mean an unthinking acceptance of their origin, but a careful reflection upon what it may mean for them in the present. Thus there is the closest connection between gospel/word and Christ 2.2 (noting the play on Christ - *χρηστός*) which, however, is not a rigid identification but shows the understanding of the gospel in a particular way. The task of the writer is one of exhortation (5.12); in this he presents anew the significance of the gospel the readers have received, interpreting its meaning for their need. E. Best has aptly remarked that the writer is not an "original thinker"¹ in the sense of Paul or John, yet neither does he simply string tradition together into a general paraenesis. True to the concept of tradition at its best, he adapts and reinterprets in response to the present. He is no traditionalist and therein lies his particular genius.

1 "1 Peter 2.4-10 A Reconsideration" Nov. Test. 11 (1969) 270-293, esp. p.279.

CHAPTER TWO

Although the image of the babes at 2.2 is taken as the focal point for our Biblical perspective on tradition, we shall have to take into consideration the whole letter, and therefore some introductory matters should be discussed at the outset. In this, one must be selective as to what is really relevant to the topic. The crucial problem here is the nature and unity of the letter and therefore we must pass over quickly such other issues as date and authorship. This is not to suggest, of course, that they are unimportant, but simply that they need not concern us directly here.

On the matter of date and authorship, it may nevertheless be helpful briefly to state one's views, as background to the main issues. One of the great difficulties about 1 Peter is how one ought to assess the evidence, both internal and external; it involves a careful weighing of many factors, and the adding of them up in different ways will lead to different conclusions. Here there is no room for dogmatism and it is wise to be guided by negative as well as positive factors.

a) Date: Since the question of date has a considerable bearing on the authorship of the letter, it may be as well to begin here. One is inclined to the view that the letter comes from the time of Domitian rather than of Nero, i.e. sometime between 80 and 100 A.D. The presbyterate and church order mentioned at 5.1 appears to be established though not yet developed, and the reference to Rome under the pseudonym of Babylon (5.13) seems to link the letter more to the thought of the Apocalypse, although there are notable differences between the two. So also we may note the

placing of the letter in the development of the early church, the use of "Haustafeln" material,¹ similarities to 1 Clement and to "later" New Testament books, e.g. Pastorals, 1 John, James and also to Ephesians. If there are Pauline elements in the letter, then one would allow time for these ideas to establish themselves. At the other end, one would also allow time for the letter to become established and be known to Polycarp and Papias (admittedly local in Asia Minor) and to 2 Peter. We might add to this the absence of controversy in making use of so much Old Testament imagery, and also the fact that there is no hint of controversy over gnostic issues of the 2nd century.

The references to trials and sufferings in the letter are perhaps not as helpful in this matter of dating as might at first be thought. Attempts have been made to assign them to the time of Nero, Domitian and Trajan. The last mentioned, the time of Trajan 112 A.D., is strongly argued by F.W. Beare,² in the light of correspondence between Trajan and Pliny. If, however, as seems more likely, the trials in mind are not due to official Roman policy but are of an unofficial and random nature, then one of the main reasons for dating the letter in the 2nd century falls to the ground. In view of the scanty evidence of persecution in the time of Domitian one is hesitant about assigning the letter to this time on the basis of the sufferings it mentions, but one may arrive at such a dating on the basis of other evidence. What the readers are suffering is something symptomatic of what obtains generally

1 See E. Best 1 Peter pp.47-48, New Century Bible, London 1971.

2 The First Epistle of Peter p.9ff (2nd ed.) Oxford 1958.

(5.9), a sporadic and unofficial recrimination against their faith on the part of people round about; even 3.15 and 4.16 may be understood in this light, something at which Roman officialdom nodded rather than undertook itself out of a definite policy. This whole question, however, of the relation of the trials to the letter as a whole will concern us later on.

b) Authorship: If one assigns the letter to the time of Domitian, then of course one will have removed the possibility of its author being Peter. Many commentators have felt that the quite good Greek style of 1 Peter renders Petrine authorship difficult,¹ scarcely the Greek of a Galilean fisherman even who had lived for some time away from Palestine. Recently, J. Sevenster has argued,² however, that Greek was perhaps known enough to be written and spoken by Palestinian Jews, and thus any argument on style against the authenticity of 1 Peter should accordingly proceed with more caution than hitherto.

The difficulty is possibly eased but not altogether resolved if the role of Silvanus as amanuensis is emphasised, since Silvanus could equally well have written on his own initiative after the death of Peter,³ but in any case there is little enough in a comparison with 1 Thessalonians to detect a "style of Silvanus". Absence of personal reminiscences of Jesus is also peculiar if the

1 On the style of 1 Peter see L. Radermacher "Der erste Petrusbrief und Silvanus" Z.N.W. 25 (1926), 287-99; A. Wifstrand "Stylistic Problems in James and 1 Peter" Stud. Theol. 1 (1947), 170-82. cf. E.G. Selwyn "Authorship of 1 Peter" E.T. 59 (1948), 256-8.

2 Do you know Greek? Leiden 1968.

3 W. Bornemann "Der erste Petrusbrief - eine Taufrede des Silvanus?" Z.N.W. 19 (1919-20), 143-65.

author be Peter, and the majority of quotations from the Old Testament, with which the letter abounds, are drawn from the Septuagint. On the matter of "Jesus reminiscences", it seems to be the case that the writer owes more to the common tradition than to eye-witness commentary - his view of the Suffering Servant comes largely from Isaiah itself and rather than find the reflection of a word of Jesus (Mk 10.45), one could argue that both 1 Peter and Mark here echo an understanding of the death of Jesus found in the Roman church.¹ So also 3.14 and Matt. 5.10 echo a persecution form rather than Peter the apostle's here recalling Jesus. Moreover, where he might have profitably used a word of Jesus to emphasise a point he apparently does not, although such an argument as this has only relative value and is more subjective than the rest. Some caution is perhaps necessary at any rate, since it is easy to be carried away in finding hints in the letter of experiences of the apostle Peter in the gospels.²

Some caution too is necessary in detecting in 1 Peter parallels to other epistles, especially Paul's. Thus Beare remarks that "entire passages are little more than an expansion or restatement of Pauline texts, and whole verses are a kind of mosaic of Pauline words and forms of expression."³ And Jülicher terms 1 Peter

1 See Best 1 Peter p52.

2 On this see R.H. Gundry "Verba Christi in 1 Peter" N.T.S. 13 (1967), 336-50; C. Spicq. "La le. Pierre et la Témoignage de St. Pierre" Stud. Theol. 20 (1966), 37-61. For critique, E. Best "1 Peter and the Gospel Tradition" N.T.S. 16 (1970), 95-113, 1 Peter p.51ff. See also J.P. Brown "Synoptic Parallels in the Epistles" N.T.S. 10 (1963), 27-48.

3 1 Peter p.25.

"ein Abklatsch paulinischer Arbeiten".¹ Certainly, the presence of Pauline ideas may be explained by the influence of the apostle at Rome,² but can we treat the letter justifiably as a compendium of borrowed themes with no originality on the author's part? It is hoped to show that the writer is skilful in his use of material and tradition, and so far as his use of the child image is concerned, differs from Paul and indeed from other epistles in the New Testament.

With these remarks then on the date and the authorship of the letter, we may now turn to consider the nature and purpose of 1 Peter.

c) The Nature and Purpose of 1 Peter: This is the crucial question which confronts us here, more than the other introductory problems, for whatever one's views on date and authorship, one must ask whether in fact 1 Peter is a letter and why it was written. It may be helpful to summarise here certain conclusions and to examine the evidence in due course. They are 1) that the letter is in fact just that, and is to be regarded as a unity, and 2) that its purpose is one of giving comfort and encouragement to Christians who are passing through a time of trial and persecution.

Although it means passing over yet again already well-trodden ground, the views of scholars and commentators on this question ought to engage our attention. Roughly speaking, three viewpoints may be discerned, without making rigid demarcations.

1 Cited critically by B. Reicke The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism Acta Sem. Neotest. Upsaliensis xiii, Kobenhavn 1946, p.229.

2 Best, 1 Peter p.32ff.

- 1) There is the traditional understanding that 1 Peter is indeed a letter, strongly argued for example by Selwyn.¹ It is a letter written by a definite person (for Selwyn, Peter himself) to definite people facing a definite situation. Following the work of Carrington,² he recognises the presence of catechetical material whose ultimate setting is baptism. He therefore surmises that the letter was planned to reach its destination and to be read at the great Easter festival in the church.³ Besides catechetical material related to baptism, Selwyn also detected a "persecution fragment", and the presence of hymnic elements, especially 2.4-8. On this last point much had already been done by Windisch in his commentary,⁴ and more recently by Boismard⁵ and Bultmann⁶ who have examined parts of the letter in great detail in an attempt (not altogether successful) to recover early hymns.
- 2) In 1911 R. Perdelwitz published a monograph⁷ which has since

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- 1 The First Epistle of St. Peter 2nd ed., London 1964. See also J.N.D. Kelly The Epistles of Peter and Jude Black's N.T. Commentaries, London 1969; E. Best 1 Peter; W.C. van Unnik "Christianity according to 1 Peter" E.T. 68 (1956), 79-83; for further discussion on this whole question see also R.P. Martin "The Composition of 1 Peter in recent Study" Vox Evangelica 1962, 29-42. Also J.W.C. Wand "The Lessons of 1 Peter" Interpretation 9 (1955), 387-399.
- 2 P. Carrington The Primitive Christian Catechism Cambridge 1940.
- 3 First Epistle of Peter p.62.
- 4 Die Katholischen Briefe Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 15 Tübingen 1951 (3 Auflage, H. Preisker)
- 5 Quatres Hymnes Baptismales Paris 1961, with prior researches, "Une Liturgie Baptismale dans la Prima Petri" R.B. 63 (1956), 182-208; 64 (1957), 161-83.
- 6 "Bekenntnis - und Liedfragmente im 1 Petrusbriefe" Coniectanea Neotestamentica 11 (1948), 1-14.
- 7 "Die Mysterienreligionen und das Problem des 1 Petrusbriefes" Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten xi (1911-12), 5-28 "Das literarische Problem". Supported by B.H. Streeter The Primitive Church London 1929, p.115ff.

proved very influential. The literary hypothesis he there suggested has outlasted its explication in terms of the Mystery Religions existing in contemporary Hellenism. Briefly, he proposed that the break at 4.11-12 was in fact a gap, and that there were really two letters, 1.3-4.11 and 1.1-2, 4.12-5.14. The latter was a *λόγος παρακλήσεως*, the former an address to people newly baptised. The two documents were combined either by accident or on purpose after lying side by side in the local church's library, the baptismal document being fitted into the framework of the smaller letter. Perdelwitz' arguments for making a division at 4.11 have never really been improved on and since he himself admits¹ that few before him have noticed it we may profitably discuss them.

a) There exist at 1.3ff and 4.12ff "zwei vollig verschiedene Situationen"² so much so that the sufferings in the latter are real and present ("gegenwartig") while in the former they are only a possibility ("hypothetisch"), noting also the use of *εἰ* at 1.6, 3.14, 3.17, and the change from optative at 3.14 to indicative 4.15. Against this, however, we may note 1) *λυπηθέντες* is aorist passive and therefore some trials have already come to them. 2.12 and 3.13 together with much of the "Haustafel" material in between, suggest that calumny and abuse are constantly present (3.16, 4.4), almost as part of their environment in waiting for them to make a wrong move or tempting them to do so (5.8). And 2) 4.12ff on the other hand, need not be any more

1 "Das Problem" p.12.

2 "Das Problem" p.14.

real than before, and the use of the optative at 3.14 may be part simply of his argument at that point.¹ So also the "fiery ordeal" may simply be a return to 1.7 and the "testing as by fire" there mentioned. Certainly Beare, a champion of the partition theory, goes too far in paraphrasing "the fiery ordeal which is raging among you". We may therefore reject Perdelwitz' argument at this point since we are not forced to accept two moments of suffering, one remote and one real.

b) Perdelwitz seeks to secure the idea of two kinds of suffering, the one remote and the other real, by noting that the rejoicing in suffering at 1.8 refers to the present, while that of 4.13 refers to the future. The argument is that since 1.8 is present tense, the writer must be referring to hypothetical trials since he would not have been so insensitive as to ask them to rejoice while hardship was actually upon them - so at 4.12-13, where their suffering was very real, he points them to future blessing. The text at both 1.6 and 1.8 is not certain, but on the basis of the evidence, ἀγαλλιᾶσθε in both seems to be the best attested reading, taking ἐν ᾧ v6 to refer to the general context of rebirth; at v8 Selwyn² prefers the future ἀγαλλιάσεσθε but this seems unlikely - κομιζόμενοι and ἀγαπᾶτε are both present as is πιστεύοντες, and the present tense preserves the paradox of

1 See F.W. Danker "1 Peter 1.24 - 2.17: A Consolatory Pericope" Z.N.W. 58 (1967), 93-102, esp. pp.100-101 Note 38 for discussion. On suffering in 1 Peter generally see E. Selwyn "Persecutions in 1 Peter" S.N.T.S. Bulletin 1950, 39-50; H. Braun "Das Leiden Christi - eine Bibelarbeit über den 1 Petrusbrief" Theologische Existenz Heute 69 München 1940; F. Filson "Partakers with Christ" Interpretation 9 (1955), 400-412. E. Sieffert "Die Heilsbedeutung des Leidens und Sterbens Christi nach dem ersten Briefe des Petrus" Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie 20 (1875), 371-440.

2 First Epistle of Peter pp.258-9, Note C.

"now" and "not yet", the sense of 1.4-5 in which their hope already enters the present as reality. (The use of the imperative as suggested by Goodspeed¹ seems somewhat forced here). With Perdelwitz we may admit that rejoicing here is present tense, but the writer at this point is making use of a theme found in Judaism and Christianity of comfort in persecution,² and it may not therefore occasion difficulty, that the writer was being insensitive or the like.

At 4.13, the joy of the readers is future because it is linked directly to the fulfilment of their hope in the revelation of Christ, but it is present also, χαίρετε, so that again what they look forward to spills over into the present time.

c) For Perdelwitz,³ 4.12 comes as something weak indeed, almost an anticlimax after the natural and climactic ἀμὴν of v.11. Moreover, in comparison with the time the writer spends on women's adornments (3.3ff) surely 5.1-5 contains weightier material, and if the letter was a unity would not the best place for this important advice have been in connection with 4.10-11? Of these arguments the first is surely subjective, and elsewhere in other epistles there occur doxologies which do not conclude the piece of writing,⁴ and therefore the presence of one here is not at all

1 Problems of N.T. Translation Chicago 1945, p.192ff.

2 W. Nauck "Freude im Leiden" Z.N.W. 46 (1955), 68-80.
cf. E. Dautzenberg "συνηρία ψυχῶν - 1 Peter 1.9" B.Z. 8 (1964), 262-76.

3 "Das Problem" p.15.

4 Gal. 1.5, Ephes. 3.21, Rom. 15.33.

decisive. The advice to women may also not be out of place¹ if women made up a proportion of the church, and the contrast with the internal seemly apparel of the Spirit would be very much to the point, given the situation of uncertainty in which the readers stood, as something just as valuable (3.4), like faith which has been tested (1.7).

More serious is the objection concerning the place of the second "Haustafel"; P. Carrington also posits two documents, 1 Peter A and B on the ground that his catechetical framework appears almost twice, with 5.1ff corresponding to the counterpart at 2.13ff.² Here, however, it must be remembered 1) that writers, and not least the author of 1 Peter, used their material to suit their purposes, and what we have here may simply be an instance of that; 2) 1 Thess. 5.1-11 is similar to 1 Peter in linking such duties to an eschatological awareness; 3) in view of this and the troubles besetting the readers, would not the writer be pushing home in a final way all that he had been saying, as indeed 4.12ff shows him to be doing, asking that together they should stand firm? (Other perhaps less likely arguments for the occurrence of this second table are that it is the work of Silvanus,³ comparing 1 Peter 5 with 1 Thess., or that it is an explication of 4.19 *ἀγαθοποιεία* .) The connective *οὖν* itself ought to be given

1 F.L. Cross' suggestion about a woman being exhorted in the act of donning her jewellery after baptism is surely not to be taken seriously. 1 Peter a Paschal Liturgy London 1954, p. 34.

2 The Primitive Christian Catechism p.31.

3 So Selwyn First Epistle p.417

weight as summing up what has gone before throughout.¹ If then these considerations have any weight, we need not accept Perdelwitz' arguments here either.

d) Perdelwitz argues² that the $\delta\epsilon', \delta\lambda\acute{\iota}\gamma\omega\nu$ of 5.12 would fit better with just such a small letter. Here, however, we may compare Hebrews 13.22 $\delta\epsilon\grave{\alpha} \beta\rho\alpha\chi\acute{\epsilon}\omega\nu$ which is substantially the same, and as Perdelwitz himself admits can refer to the whole letter preceding. Moreover, we would have to recognise that whoever combined the letter apparently felt no difficulty on the matter.

At this point we conclude Perdelwitz' arguments for the partition of the letter at 4.11-12. His theory has indeed been quite influential, and many scholars and commentators who support such a division and who differ in several ways (as we shall see) from Perdelwitz yet owe much to him. We have, however, listed his arguments and have found no compelling reason to accept them. We may here nevertheless consider two further arguments for making a division at 4.11-12, especially as presented by F.W. Beare.³ They are a) that the style in 4.12 differs from that of the previous part, b) that 1.3-4.11 contains no personal references to people and places and seems to be complete in itself as a homily or discourse.

a) Beare's contrast of 4.12ff as a letter dashed off "in quick and nervous haste" compared with the lofty and rounded style of 1.3-4.11 is surely a subjective argument. Is it not all a matter of how one reads the letter? To my own mind, 1) the style

1 See Kelly Epistles of Peter and Jude p.196.

2 "Das Problem" p.16.

3 First Epistle pp.6-9.

is fairly uniform throughout, allowing of course for traditional elements scattered throughout the letter. 4.12ff re-emphasises and rounds off what the writer has been saying with no appreciable difference in style. On the other hand one might, of course, expect this if the homily and the letter came from the same person; 2) is not the style of 4.7ff just as pungent and "abrupt" as anything in 4.12ff?

b) More serious is the contention that 1.3-4.11 contains none of the usual personal traits that one would expect in a letter. But such a problem is not peculiar to 1 Peter - what for instance should we make of Rom. 1.18-11.36 where the " παρακαλῶ " section begins? The aim of the letter is one of exhortation, according to 5.12, to maintain the faith in the midst of trials, and the section 1.3-4.11 is quite consonant with this since, as we have seen, the difficulties in this section are just as "real" as those in the other, cf. 1.6, 2.11-12, (clearly the implication is that people were actually criticising them), 3.9 (which may recall a word of Jesus, Matt. 5.39, 43, but also traditional advice in other letters Rom. 12.17, 1 Thess. 5.15, cf. 1 Cor. 6.7), 3.13, 4.4. Moreover, on the other hand, there are no "personal" touches as such before the " παρακαλῶ " section at 5.1 so that one could argue that even 4.12ff is not entirely free from Beare's own criticism.

On these grounds, therefore, we need not accept the division of the letter at 4.11. Moreover, the introduction at 4.12 ἀγαπητοί, μὴ -- need not be considered abrupt in view of other places where the writer introduces topics in seemingly abrupt

fashion, e.g. 2.11. In any case, what at first sight may seem abrupt is not really so but is very much in context - 4.12 may be considered to be resumptive of what has gone before, and this not in any tedious sense (as Perdelwitz thought), but in order to stress it anew. The arguments adduced above against theories of the letter's disunity may also, on the positive side, carry some weight in defence of its unity. The letter shows a close unity of thought and argument, a tight interweaving of theological statement and practical exhortation so that it is extremely difficult to divide the book in any way without doing violence to the writer's train of thought. In so compact a piece of writing, theories of partition or interpolation are hard to accept - compare for example, 2.11ff, 3.13ff, 4.12ff.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the third approach to 1 Peter, and by way of introduction to it, we should here note the view widely held about 1.3-4.11 (in the case of Bornemann 1.3-5.11¹) that it is a homily on baptism most likely delivered to neophytes on the occasion of their entry into the church. So Perdelwitz understands the section to be an address to people newly baptised; "so dass wir also in dem Hauptabschnitt unseres Schreibens das Älteste, uns erhaltene Beispiel eine altchristlichen Kasualrede zu sehen hätten."² On the basis of this, he interprets the particle "now" which he says "runs like a scarlet thread"

1 W. Bornemann "Der erste Petrusbrief - eine Taufrede des Silvanus?" p.143ff. One cannot help but feel he owes something to Perdelwitz though he nowhere mentions him, a fact noted also by G.R. Beasley-Murray Baptism in the N.T., London 1962, p.252.

2 "Das Problem" p.19.

through the author's statements¹ - "Now they rejoice", "now they walk not in darkness but in light", "they have now attained to what was sought by the prophets" etc. In other words the νῦν and ἀπὸ are the "now" of the newly baptised. In this way he also deals with the change of person at 1.3 and 2.24 from second to first plural. The change is for Perdelwitz abrupt, but can be explained by the fact that when the writer is speaking generally he includes himself, but when his readers as neophytes are being instructed about the application of the faith to themselves, he makes a distinction. On the basis of this, if the letter was a unity, then ἀποτιγένηντα at 2.2 would be out of place since many of the readers would undoubtedly have been Christians for some time - βρέφη might apply to them with reference, as in Hebrews 5.12, to their slow progress in the faith, but scarcely ἀποτιγένηντα.² We are not, however, forced to give the particles νῦν and ἀπὸ the precise meaning which Perdelwitz gives. They may be understood throughout the letter 1.6, 8, 12, 2.10, 25, 3.21 etc. in a broad and general sense, and if so, then at 2.2 ἀποτιγένηντα need not refer to how long or short a period the readers had been Christians.³ The reference to baptism may not be as explicit as might be supposed at this point.

1 "Das Problem" p.18 "Wie ein roter Faden zieht sich das 'Jetzt' durch alle Ausführungen des Verfassers".

2 "Das Problem" p.25.

3 Likewise the writer's use of aorist imperatives 1.13, 22, 5.2, etc. need not be pressed into a baptismal context "inculcating the adoption of a new attitude" (Beare First Epistle p.84) but is part of the writer's strong hortatory purpose (see Kelly Epistles of Peter and Jude ad loc.) in contrasting their life in obedience to the gospel with formal ways.

According to Bornemann,¹ 1.3-5.11 represents the (baptismal) discourse, based on Psalm 34 and is to be attributed to the aged Silvanus some time around 90 A.D. Bornemann also lays stress on the "now" at 3.21, "baptism which now saves you", and linking it to Titus 3.5 argues that baptism had just taken place. The use of the present tense and the mention of "you" for "us" further strengthens the fact that the readers were being singled out for their experience of baptism at this time. More recent scholarship has tended, while following the discourse theory, to put its conclusion as Perdelwitz does at 4.11, but the idea at any rate is widely held that 1 Peter contains within it a baptismal discourse - the idea of "new birth", hints of conversion at 4.3ff, the language (ἀποθέμενοι, προσερχόμενοι) and the general imagery of 2.1ff, the large amount of catechetical material discovered by Carrington and Selwyn with its probable "Sitz im Leben" in baptismal instruction, together with the explicit reference to baptism itself at 3.21.

3) This theme of baptism which forms part of the discourse theory has been developed into what one might call a liturgical interpretation of 1 Peter. This is associated particularly with H. Preisker² and F.L. Cross.³ It would be tedious to go through the work of these two scholars in detail and the criticisms of their work already made. What they see in 1 Peter is not even a

1 "Der erste Petrusbrief" p.143ff.

2 Die Katholischen Briefe von H. Windisch 3 Auflage umgearbeitete von H. Preisker, Tübingen 1951, p.156ff.

3 1 Peter - A Paschal Liturgy

baptismal discourse, but on the part of Preisker an actual liturgy taking place - an eye-witness account of the ceremony in its various stages with various contributors; and on the part of Cross, the celebrant's part in the Easter Pasch.

It seems fair to say that neither view has won much support and shows more each scholar's ingenuity than anything else. Kelly rightly points out that Preisker's reconstruction is really "a 'tour de force' of subjective improvisation".¹ Cross's theory scarcely fares any better and reads more like an interpretation of 1 Peter from the point of view of the Homily of Melito of Sardis, than of 1 Peter in its own right.² It is easy to see, however, how such theories have arisen out of a concentration on baptismal elements in the letter. Recently, A.R.C. Leaney³ has attempted to reinforce Cross's view of 1 Peter and the Jewish Passover liturgy. Again, however, the evidence seems very circumstantial. Leaney suggests that 1.18 refers to Joshua 24.2-4 which forms part of the Jewish liturgy "in the beginning our fathers were worshippers of strange gods ----." The writer's identification of the church with Israel, coupled to Exodus themes, gives this suggestion some appeal. However, that he is thereby contrasting "the ancient Jewish worship with its Christian fulfilment"⁴ is unlikely since the vain traditions of 1.18 refer to former pagan ways. So also 3.18ff may

1 Epistles of Peter and Jude p.18

2 For detailed criticism see C.F.D. Moule "The Nature and Purpose of 1 Peter" N.T.S. 3 (1956-7), 1-11; T.C.G. Thornton "1 Peter A Paschal Liturgy?" J.T.S. n.s. 12 (1961), 14-26.

3 "1 Peter and the Passover - an Interpretation" N.T.S. 10 (1964), 238-51.

4 "1 Peter and the Passover" p.246.

point to "a theology of liberation achieved by submission to God —
 — a Passover theme, if not the Passover theme",¹ but need we
 connect 1 Peter and the Jewish Passover liturgy therefore?

Equally circumstantial is the attempt of N. Hillyer² to link
 1 Peter to the Feast of Tabernacles. The appearance of common
 themes need not require dependency, and indeed in view of the
 eclecticism of the writer and the origins of Christianity in
 Judaism generally, it would be strange if there were no echoes.

To these baptismal elements we must now turn since a decision
 on this matter will greatly affect one's view of the nature and
 purpose of 1 Peter.

One cannot help but feel that with so much scholarly attention
 in recent years upon traditional material in the early church,
 especially catechetical and liturgical fragments, a certain sense
 of perspective has been lost. This seems very much to be the case
 with 1 Peter. It would, of course, be mistaken to deny the
 presence of baptismal elements within the letter, but need we
 thereby be mesmerised into accepting wholesale the view that
 1 Peter in toto is a baptismal discourse? a) With the possible
 exception of Bornemann, those who argue for the presence of such a
 discourse must posit a break at 4.11 and this we have already found
 no compelling reason to accept. Arguments in its favour are not
 decisive, and on the contrary the letter presents too compact and
 close-reasoned a form to permit it. b) It is axiomatic of
 literary interpretation that any hypothesis must reasonably account

1 "1 Peter and the Passover" p.249

2 "First Peter and the Feast of Tabernacles" Tyndale Bulletin 21
 (1970), 39-70.

for the facts - thus those who are in favour of partition must explain how the two documents came to be combined, and those supporting the liturgical theory must explain how such came to be incorporated into a letter. Thus for example, Cranfield simply states¹ that the best hypothesis is that the substance of an already existing sermon ("it may well have been a baptismal sermon") was incorporated with fresh material, 1.1-2 and 4.12ff, written with the present situation in mind.

The matter of incorporation, however, becomes quite crucial when it is linked to the references to trials, not in 4.12ff but in the actual homily itself, e.g. 1.6ff, 2.12 where the readers are obviously being slandered, 3.13ff, 4.4 (recent conversion need not be in mind here); and generally throughout the "discourse" the emphasis placed on Christ's sufferings would seem odd on so joyful an occasion as baptism, granted even that neophytes would be cautioned as to the difficulties of their Christian obligations. We have already had occasion to reject Perdelwitz' distinction between suffering as a remote possibility and as a present reality, so that the trials hinted at would appear to be a reality in 1.3-4.11 - after all, λυπηθέντες is aorist. In Jewish proselyte baptism a warning was often given to the candidate that he might expect trials and afflictions, and there is a close parallel to 1 Peter in Ecclus. 2.1-2:

1 1 and 2 Peter and Jude Torch series, London 1960, p.13.



"My son when thou comest to serve the Lord,
 Prepare thy soul for temptation.
 Set thy heart aright and endure firmly,
 And be not fearful in time of calamity".¹

And there follows, as in 1 Peter, the image of testing gold in a furnace (cf. Ps. 12.6). Nevertheless, the situation in 1.3-4.11 does seem to be a real one so far as hardship is concerned. On the understanding that the trials are real, we must say that either such trials were a reality when the discourse was delivered first, or that the references to them have been subsequently added. Of these two possibilities the second perhaps carries more weight a) because we have already argued that the letter is a unity and therefore there is a unity in the trials involved, and b) it is difficult to imagine a baptismal address so geared to the question of afflictions - even the concepts of glory, hope, rejoicing, God's judgment, etc. can be shown to be linked to this rather than to the moment of baptism.² One is not, of course, denying the presence of certain baptismal elements, but seeks to locate them within the purpose of the letter which devolves upon the question of whether the readers will now, in this present situation, persevere in the faith to which they have been called, into which they have been baptised.

The point is that if originally there was a discourse used, it has been so reworked and refurbished as to change its original

1 R.H. Charles The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament Oxford 1968, Vol.I, p.321. See generally D. Daube The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism London 1956, "A Baptismal Catechism", pp.106-140, esp. p.113ff.

2 See Nauck "Freude im Leiden" p.68ff.

intent. This is in keeping with the writer's compact style to which we have already made reference. This compactness and close reasoning still remain despite the appearance of occasional rough edges in his use of traditional material. And indeed he shows considerable originality and no lack of imagination in the use to which he puts his sources.¹

The presence of catechetical material, and the amount is considerable, should be weighed very carefully. The scholarly work of Carrington and Selwyn is very valuable indeed, but one can become so caught up in the detecting of prior sources and fragments of tradition that one sits loose to the way in which they are used in a piece of writing. It is by comparing 1 Peter with other letters that one detects the traditional material, much of whose environment was probably baptismal, but that is not to suggest that Paul, James etc. were writing on baptism or giving instruction to neophytes. In other words the presence of catechetical and baptismal elements elsewhere should warn us against finding in 1 Peter as a whole a baptismal tract although baptism may, I believe, be at the back of the writer's mind. In short, the controlling theme of the letter throughout is not baptism but the trials being endured, and it is to the comforting of people in this situation that he bends all his material, including ideas of baptism.²

1 See E. Lohse "Paränese und Kerygma im 1 Petrusbrief" Z.N.W. 45 (1954), 68-89, who argues for the consistent use of traditional material on the part of the writer in relation to the letter's theme of comfort in adversity.

2 It is interesting to note that catechetical material appears also in 4.12ff, so much so that Carrington could find in each almost a whole catechesis as he understood it, Primitive Christian Catechism p.31ff. The presence of such in the "Letter" as well as the "discourse" makes one wary of over-stressing the catechesis in 1.3-4.11.

Some scholars who argue that 1.3-4.11 is a discourse approximate to this view. Thus Beare, for example, on the basis of the common authorship for the two sections, can write: "It would appear then that the Christian teacher who writes to rally his flock against their sore trial incorporates into his letter the words that many of them heard from his lips on the occasion of their baptism."¹ Apart from the fact that 1.12 would suggest that someone other than the author preached the gospel to them, such an approach does not perhaps do sufficient justice to the skill of the writer who grapples with his readers' problems not only at 4.12ff, and not only by "incorporating" (the word is significant) a homily into his letter, but by writing indeed a letter to this end, to which all its contents tend.

A note on Babylon 5.13 - Although it is not often noticed, it could be argued that we ought to make a break at 4.11 on the grounds of such a pseudonym as this for Rome" being used over against the high esteem for the authorities at 2.13. Has the situation not now worsened so that Rome becomes the arch enemy, the epitome of all that is evil? Here again, however, we ought to be careful not to read too much from the Apocalypse into 1 Peter even if they belong to the same period, for there are important differences of outlook.³ We may detect two strands of meaning in the word, not

1 First Epistle of Peter p.8.

2 Most likely it signifies a real place, and this as a pseudonym for Rome rather than an actual Babylon, on the grounds of such a description in Jewish and Christian circles, see discussion in commentaries ad loc.

3 Selwyn 1 Peter p.303ff. See also generally C. Freeman Sleeper "Political Responsibility according to 1 Peter" Nov. Test. 10 (1968), 270-286.

unrelated, and both of use to the writer: a) Babylon as the place of Exile which would fit quite well with 1.1 and 2.11 so that the writer as it were begins and ends on this note - Rome as the heart of man's authority and organisation, the centre of the then known world, and yet supremely the place of the Christian's exile. If the readers in the provinces are exiles, how much more so at Rome; b) yet there is a hint, as Selwyn aptly remarks, of something "more sinister",¹ a hint which later in the Apocalypse is a frontal attack, Babylon as the centre of all ungodliness and evil. The import of the description in 1 Peter is, I believe, more ethical than political, especially in view of the great stress laid throughout the letter on holiness and the shunning of all that is wicked. The two ideas of sojourning and being holy for instance combine at 2.11 - the Christian's avoidance of evil is the stamp, or one of them, of his being a pilgrim.

There may, on the other hand, be something politic about the writer's use of the word. There exists in the letter what seems to be a tension between on the one hand the Christian's need to win others by good example, and on the other hand in many cases the knowledge that he will not succeed; a kind of balance of optimism and pessimism set within an eschatological framework; in other words, obey Rome/human authority but it is really Babylon the unrepentant anyway. We may see this tension a) in the advice to women to win unbelieving husbands by good example (3.1ff), and also perhaps 2.12, that others should be led to glorify God by the readers' good example (Matt. 5.16). Moreover, they should only

1 1 Peter p.305.

suffer for doing right so that they can silence calumniators (2.15), or put them to shame (3.16), or at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they do God's will and follow in Christ's footsteps (2.21); b) on the other hand there is the idea of God's judgment which, though it judges them also (4.17, 1.17ff, 4.5), yet judges all, so that God's judgment is both a warning to them to live aright and a word of comfort that their cause will be vindicated. Again, 2.6ff shows that the stone which gives a foundation in faith is also a stone of stumbling for unbelief, a word of comfort for those who believe.¹ In all things, however, whether the impression made is good or bad, they must always do their best (3.15, 4.15). (There is, as we have seen, no need to explain these as official enquiries ~~or~~ to think that here Christianity is a criminal charge - rather the atmosphere seems to be one of general dislike).

If something of the above be allowed, then there may be an element of this in the writer's use of Babylon. Certainly it is a rich concept and he is not averse to apocalyptic and prophetic imagery, e.g. Noah and Enoch speculation, the Devil as a prowling lion, etc. The image, however, is fluid and there are very likely several associations and ideas "held in solution".² At any rate we have found reason enough to connect it with the whole letter and to reject the idea that it belongs to a time of more serious peril than before.

1 With F.W. Danker we ought to regard this whole section as offering comfort - "1 Peter, 24-217 - a Consolatory Pericope" p.93ff.

2 Selwyn First Epistle p.304.

Three other theories in brief

Some commentators who have been unwilling to accept the partition hypothesis that 1.3-4.11 contains an earlier discourse worked into a later letter and have yet sensed the break which exists at 4.11-12, have adopted a variety of theories:

- a) That the writer had just finished his letter when news arrived of a fresh outbreak, and he set to to write some further comments. This, however, seems somewhat unlikely and in any case we need not accept that the situation in 4.12ff is any worse than before.
- b) More ingenious is the suggestion of C.F.D. Moule¹ that what we have here is a circular letter, or in fact two letters, one to churches not facing trouble directly and one to churches in the midst of trial, each being read as occasion demanded; letter one comprises 1.1-4.11 plus 5.12-14, and letter two 1.1-2.10 plus 4.12-5.14. Again, this is not convincing - such divisions of the text are always to some extent arbitrary² given the close texture of the writer's thought, and again we need not accept the initial difficulty that 4.12ff reflects a different situation.
- c) W.J. Dalton in the context of his book "Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits" is convinced that the difficult situation which faces the letter's recipients underlies the whole of it, but he is also swayed by the optatives at 3.14, 3.17, and advances the novel theory that the "new note" of 4.12 is due to the writer's having

1 "Nature and Purpose of 1 Peter" p.7ff.

2 See E. Best 1 Peter p.27ff.

hitherto wished to spare his readers' feelings, the optatives express "the delicate and affectionate attitude of the writer".¹ He does this so as not to "frighten them with too blunt a reference to the painful trial of persecution".² This theory, however, is also open to fault; certainly we may dispute such a statement as "the letter does not begin in the atmosphere of battle itself".³ On the contrary the writer deals with the problem almost from the outset, and moreover it is not the case that "only after 3.8 is suffering formally introduced, and very gently"⁴ in view of the several references to it prior to that. Dalton is indeed right in seeing that trials are in the writer's mind from the outset, but we may hesitate about tracing such a development or a warming to the subject. The optatives of 3.15ff need not be pressed in this way, nor need we understand 4.12 as the climax in which the subject of suffering is brought into full light. Rather it is climactic in the sense of being resumptive and conclusive of what has already gone before.

By way then of summary of what has gone before in our study of introductory problems relating to 1 Peter, we may note some conclusions:

a) That the traditional understanding still has much to commend it, namely that 1 Peter is in fact a letter, albeit containing a fair amount of traditional material which the writer has worked

1 Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits Rome 1965, p.68.

2 Christ's Proclamation p.68.

3. Christ's Proclamation p.84.

4 Christ's Proclamation p.84.

into his over-riding theme;

b) This theme and purpose, as explicitly stated at 5.12, is the comfort and garrisoning (1.5 $\phi\rho\omicron\upsilon\pi\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$) of Christians in Asia Minor who face much trial and uncertainty from their surroundings. The sufferings, as we have suggested, are of a local and general nature such as might obtain at any time, rather than an official state persecution. Consequently we cannot use this to fix a definite date for the letter. On the basis of other evidence, catechetical material, hymnic fragments, echoes of other letters in the New Testament etc., we may tentatively suggest a time toward the end of the first century.

c) We have found no compelling reason to divide the letter at 4.11 nor to accept in large measure the theory that 1.3-4.11 is a (baptismal) homily, for even if it were the author has done far more than incorporate it into his letter, and has rather so re-worked it that it has become an integral part of the letter itself.

CHAPTER THREE

Before proceeding to examine the child image at various points in the New Testament and particularly in 1 Peter, it will be helpful to look briefly at the attitude of the Ancient World generally to the child. We shall examine the evidence in two parts, firstly in the literature of Greece and Rome, and secondly in Scripture and the Rabbinic writings.¹

a) The Graeco-Roman World - While one must of course guard against over-simplification, it would seem that the Graeco-Roman world did not have a very high regard for children. Childhood and childishness are virtually synonymous and the desirable thing is to be rid of that stage and its attributes as quickly as possible in order to be a mature, responsible adult person. So, for example, Pythagoras demands "ὅπως μήτε οἱ παῖδες νηπιάζουσιν, μήτε οἱ νεανίσκοι παιδαριεύονται μήτε οἱ ἄνδρες νεανιεύονται μήτε οἱ γέροντες παραφρονοῦν".² In Homer, the adulthood of the hero is emphasised in contrast to being childish "do not think to frighten me with words as if I were a child" (Iliad xx, 200-1);³ "they whine amongst themselves like little children or widows" (Iliad ii, 289-90); "you are babbling like little children" (Iliad ii, 337-8, cf xx, 244). It is not at all surprising that the gods are thought

1 See especially T.D.N.T. καῖς (Oepke) 5, p.636ff; S. Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant, "Enfants", "Petits", et "Simples" dans La Tradition Synoptique (Études Bibliques) Paris 1969, p.276ff, cf p.168ff.

2 Aristoxenes Fragment 35, quoted in Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant, p.276.

3 Socrates called popular dogmas παιδίων δαίματα, "bogies to frighten children", Marcus Aurelius Meditations xi, 23.

either to have passed rapidly through childhood, or at least to have shown their future prowess in childhood; Apollo, ἔτι βρέφος slays the serpent Python (Euripides' Iphigenia in Tauris 1249-51), and famous men likewise are thought to have displayed maturity in childhood, e.g. the young Alexander, in his father's absence, meets the Persian ambassadors and converses with them not in a childish fashion, but maturely and royally, or the similar thought expressed by Josephus that Moses was mature for his years. (Such a view as this recalls Luke 2.41ff).¹ Perhaps the Latin "erudire" best sums up the Classical attitude to the child, where rigorous and strenuous effort is needed in the education and training of the child, and even then normal gifts and the proper technique are necessary to make anything of it (cf Plutarch De Liberis Educandis, ii, 1-14). As one would expect this somewhat unfavourable attitude towards the child is reflected in art. Painting and drawings reflect this indifference so that the child is pictured not as a person in its own right but as a kind of poor reduction of an adult. Practically speaking, while a child might be welcomed as more labour and strength for a family, yet there was also the practice of exposing children who were weak or unsuitable in the interests of maintaining strength and economy.

In the Hellenistic era it is possible to detect an improvement in attitude,² and even from the time of Euripides the candour and frankness of the child is thought to have had a special appeal to

1 For this and examples preceding see Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.277.

2 T.D.N.T. 5, "παῖς" p.640ff.

the gods. So, e.g., little Phoebus grasps hold of the throne of Zeus and begs him to give earth the power of prophetic dreams, and Zeus smiles and nods his head (Iphigenia in Tauris, 1270-83). And children frequently took part in cultic ceremonies. So Catullus in his Hymn to Diana¹ opens with the words:

"Dianae sumus in fide
puellae et pueri integri:
Dianam pueri integri
puellaeque canamus."

Moreover, in education and moral thinking the importance of the child was recognised in that care of the child was necessary if it was to grow to responsible adulthood. "The utmost respect should be accorded the child" (Juvenal Satires iv, 44-9). And all in all the child's faults are really to be excused on the grounds of its innocence and lack of knowledge (Seneca De Constantia Sapientis 11, De Ira ii, 27).

It would not be proper to conclude this brief survey without reference to Epictetus who, amongst the ancient writers, makes much use of the child image.² For Epictetus, the child is worthy of all affection and care (Discourses 1 xi, 21ff; xxiii, 3ff), and though he advises the Cynic against marriage and all the duties to wife and child that it involves (111, xxii, 69ff), yet children are God's gift (IV i, 107). He finds their antics endearing, e.g. "Who is not tempted by attractive and wide awake children to join their sports, and crawl on all fours with them, and talk baby talk with them?" (11 xxiv, 18), and he responds also to their spontaneity

1 Cited by Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.278

2 See R. Renner Das Kind. Ein Gleichnismittel des Epiktets München 1905.

"For example when the children come up to us and clap their hands and say 'Today is the good Saturnalia' do we say to them 'All this is not good'? Not at all; but we too clap our hands to them." (I xxix, 31).

On the other hand, in common with others, Epictetus regards childishness as something incompatible with mature understanding, e.g. "children indeed when they cry a little because their nurse has left forget their troubles as soon as they get a biscuit. Would you therefore have us resemble children? No, by Heaven! For I claim we should be influenced in this way not by a biscuit, but by true judgements" (II xvi, 25 cf xxiv, 53; and also III xxiv, 9, II xvi, 39). Those who push and chase after positions of authority and scramble in unseemly fashion for them are like children (IV vii, 22-3). Again the mature man is one who is not fickle like children but devotes himself after careful thought wholly to his task (Encheiridion 29.7, cf 29.3; Discourses III xv, 5ff, xiii 18ff.)

On the other hand, children, though fickle, at least know when they have had enough of something, and so the mature man ought also to know when to quit, or if he stay to accept it without complaint, I xxiv, 20). Again it is the mark of the mature man who is making progress to realise his own moral responsibility within him, in contrast to children who shift the blame elsewhere. "Even while we were still children, our nurse, if ever we bumped into something when we were going along with our mouths open, did not scold us, but used to beat the stone. Why, what did the stone do? Ought it to have moved out of the road because of your childish folly? --- So, even when we have grown up, we look like children. For it is being a child to be unmusical in things musical, to be unlettered in things literary, to be uneducated in life." (III xix, 1ff)

b) Biblical-Jewish thought - From the point of view of Scripture and of Jewish understanding, the child is seen positively from the very beginning as God's gift. (So childlessness is a sign of reproach and of ill-favour with God, e.g. Gen. 15.5, 16.10; Prov. 17.6; Ps. 127.3, 5, Ps. 128.3 and so on). The duty of begetting children is positively enjoined, Yeb. 6.6.¹ The child when born is also taken immediately into the covenant of Israel through the rite of circumcision, and is trained up to accept adult status under the Law, so that he takes upon himself all the obligations of the Torah.

On the other hand it would seem that there is no particular innocence or special virtue attached to the child as such,² though Is. 11.6ff makes use of the guilelessness of the child in the picture of the coming reign of God when peace and justice and harmony are to be established. So also the Psalmist can detect the praise of God in the babbling of children (Ps. 8.2). Children can be very naughty (2 Kings 2.23-4), and again as one might expect in the Wisdom Literature, their childishness and foolishness are condemned; e.g. Eccles. 10.16 "Woe to you, O Land, when your king is a child"³ (cf Is. 3.4 where the threat is made of being governed by "mere boys");

1 See Légasse Jésus et l'Enfant p.281; H. Strack and P. Billerbeck Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch 2te Aufl. München 1954-61, i p.569-70, ii p.373.

2 In Rabbinic debate on the origin of evil, a new-born child might be held to be innocent, free from sin and guilt (see below p.161ff), but then others argued that sin could be inherent in the child even in its mother's womb. Accordingly it is difficult to make anything of the innocence of the child as an attribute. See Strack and Billerbeck Kommentar aus Talmud und Midrasch iv p.468ff; T.D.N.T. 5 "παῖς" p.647. H. Herter "Das unschuldige Kind" in Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 4 (1961), 146-62.

3 751 New English Bible reads "slave".

Wisdom 12.24 "deluded like thoughtless children" and 15.14 where Israel's oppressors are "worse than infantile". For the child firm education is needed, e.g. Prov. 22.15 "folly is deep rooted in the heart of a boy; a good beating will drive it right out of him" (cf 23.13, 13.24, Eccclus. 30.1ff). In the LXX, translating the Hebrew 'נָבָל has a double nuance;¹ apart from the Psalms it has an unfavourable sense, describing one who is foolish and ignorant. On the other hand, particularly in the Psalms it describes "the simple", those who seek after God in obedience to the Law, e.g. Ps. 19.8, 12 - - - σοφίζουσα νήπια - - - ; it therefore approximates to the צַדִּיקִים, the lowly righteous ones who wait upon God, e.g. Ps. 116.3ff φυλάσσων τὰ νήπια, ἐταπεινώθην. Thus the way is open for Matthew, for example, to link the Q logion of the revelation to the νήπιος with a call to lowly obedience (Matt. 11.25ff - Luke 10.21ff, cf Matt. 11.28ff).

In Rabbinic thought where education is also highly regarded, the child is looked upon quite favourably. This may at first sight seem to be in contrast to the Wisdom Literature which has been cited, but here the emphasis is very much on school children and reflects the glory of learning Torah. Thus many proverbs about the high estimation of school children really exalt the Torah rather than the child.² So, for example, R. Issachar said: "If a child reads Moshe as Mushe, Aharon as Aharun, Efron as Efran, God says: 'even his babbling is beloved to me.'" (Cant. r. ii.4 Soncino's transl.);

1 See Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.168ff; T.D.N.T. 4 νήπιος p.916.

2 Strack and Billerbeck Kommentar aus Talmud und Midrasch i, p.780ff.

R. Judah said: "Come and see how beloved are children by the Holy One, blessed be He: the Sanhedrin was exiled but the Shechinah did not go into exile with him; the priestly watches were exiled but the Shechinah did not go into exile with them; when however the children were exiled the Shechinah went into exile with them."

(Lam. r. 1.6 Someino transl.) Here presumably such high regard is not because of any particular attribute inherent in the child as such but rather that children assure the future and continuity of Israel. (So R. Joshua argues¹ that children of the unrighteous do have a place in the world to come since according to Ps. 116.6 "God protects the simple" (□'רנ taken as children), and Dan. 4.23 "Hew down the tree and destroy it, but its stump with its roots leave in the ground". Children represent the roots of the people and are protected by God).

There is also, however, plenty of evidence that the rabbis shared the view of the Wisdom writers about the child's ability in itself. In the Mishnah, minors () ז פ) are listed along with others such as deaf, blind, dumb, mentally deficient, women and slaves² as to be excluded from bearing responsibility in certain legal and religious matters. Again, "R. Jochanan has said 'Since the day the temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from the prophets and given to fools and children'";³ "R. Dosa b. Harkinas said 'Morning sleep and midday wine and children's talk and sitting in the meeting-houses of the ignorant people ('am haaretz') put a man out of the world'".⁴

1 Tosephta Sanhedrin xiii 1-2, cf Sanh. 110b, cited by Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.283.

2 Gittin 2.6; Terumoth 1.1; Berakoth 7.2.

3 Strack and Billerbeck Kommentar aus Talmud und Midrasch i, p.607.

4 Aboth 3.11. Transl. H. Danby Mishnah p.451.

This attitude is also reflected at Qumran, where minors along with women are excluded from the camp: "No boy or woman shall enter their camps from the time they leave Jerusalem and march out to war until they return." (CD. vii,3). On the other hand the Covenanters were enjoined to look after children with a view to instructing them to the point of entering the community (1QSa.1.6-9). According to Josephus, although the community rejected marriage it accepted children from outside; on the other hand CD supposes the existence of married people in the community.¹ Perhaps the Qumran writings to some extent reflect ideal practices rather than the actual state of affairs.

This then concludes our brief survey of the attitudes to the child in the Ancient World. Despite some care and affection for the child at certain times in the writings of certain authors, the attitude overall is not particularly favourable, especially when it is a matter of knowledge and understanding. Childhood is an age to be rid of as quickly as possible, and the image of the child when contrasted with adult behaviour, which is the norm, conveys censure and criticism.

1 See Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.285-6.

CHAPTER FOUR

Against the background of the child in the Ancient World, we may now turn to the New Testament. In this chapter we shall examine the child image mainly in Matthew (amongst the Synoptic Gospels), Paul and Hebrews before turning to 1 Peter. Such a survey is necessary in order to ascertain more clearly the meaning and the function of the image in 1 Peter. The reason therefore for selecting these texts in particular is twofold:

a) They deal, like 1 Peter, with the child image in a context of tradition, of how something has been handed on and assimilated. Amongst the Synoptic Gospels, it is Matthew who makes most use of the child image in relation to the church's understanding of its discipleship and its message (so e.g. at 11.28ff Matthew adds the summons to share Jesus' yoke and learn of him to the Q saying of the revelation to the *νήπιοι*); and then again at 1 Cor. 3.1ff and Hebrews 5.12ff the contrast between childhood and maturity, milk and solid food makes these texts of particular interest.

b) Following on from this, almost all commentators compare our text of 1 Peter 2.2 with those of Matthew, Paul and Hebrews, and since they are most frequently cited in relation to 2.2, we should consider them here.

If we may summarise here certain findings for the sake of clarity, it is hoped to show a) that the child image does not point us to a double standard within the tradition received, or even that there are two traditions, one for babes and the other (more advanced) for the mature *τέλειοι*; b) that the child image consequently offers not so much a perspective on the tradition as such, as a perspective on how that tradition is received and understood and allowed to control the recipients' life. Against this background, 1 Peter seems closer to the gospel usage than either Paul or Hebrews.

1.

In the Synoptic Gospels the image of the child is rather a complex one,¹ especially since there are three different words used in different contexts (and perhaps a fourth, Mk. 10.24 τέκνα, only here as an explicit address to the disciples cf. 2.5, Matt. 9.2) - νήπιος, παῖδιον and μικρός. It is Matthew who makes the most use of this, a fact which is itself not without significance since he especially is concerned with a description of true discipleship in the church, and thus the child image belongs with other themes very much to his paraenetic purpose, offering a particular perspective on tradition within the pattern of discipleship which he portrays.²

1. νήπιος

Matt. 11.25ff The parallel Luke 10.21ff differs mainly in context. For Matthew, the saying falls into three related parts, whatever its original composition may have been;³ v.25-6 Jesus thanks God for his way of revelation (οὕτως εὐδοκία) which is the revelation to the νήπιοι, v.27 Jesus says that all things have been given to him by his Father (πάντα μοι παρεδόθη), v.28-30 Jesus issues an invitation to the weary and hard-pressed, absent from Luke. One finds it hard to say with any exactitude whether it is Matthew's addition at this point or is due to Luke's

1 See generally S. Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant.

2 One must of course be careful about synthesising unduly the term "child" (παῖδιον) with the neighbouring concepts of "simple" (νήπιος) and "small" (μικρός - ἐλάχιστος), in that these latter descriptions need not necessarily include the child as such. On the other hand, however, there is a tendency in the Synoptic gospels and especially in Matthew to broaden the reference to the child to include other similar descriptions as "simple", "small", "lowly".

3 See R. Bultmann History of the Synoptic Tradition 2nd edit., Oxford 1968, pp. 159-60, who finds three separate sayings; contrast E. Norden Agnostos Theos Leipzig 1913, pp. 277-308 who argues for the close unity of the passage after the pattern of the Hellenistic Mysteries. See also H.D. Betz "Logion of Easy Yoke and of Rest" J.B.L. 86 (1967), 10-24.

omission.¹ What Jesus receives, παρεδόθη the language of tradition, is not, however, any kind of secret knowledge or "depositum" but is God's ἐξουσία;² the πάντα which is given is not all things in the sense of Jesus as the revealer of secrets, but as the one who has Messianic authority. Admittedly it is not until 16.13ff that we find Peter's confession, where again it is God who reveals, but one may not be wrong in seeing here a preliminary hint of Christ as Lord in the context of God's revelation, and one may compare also the πᾶσα ἐξουσία of 28.19 in understanding the content of πάντα v.27.

With πάντα one can scarcely avoid considering ταῦτα.³ In the Matthean form it could well refer to v.21 and the δυνάμεις performed in Chorazin and Bethsaida, and in Luke to the successes of the Seventy in their mission, but even such δυνάμεις are part of the fulness of God's authority which Christ possesses. Thus, in connecting v.25-6 with v.27, that which is revealed to the νῆπιοι are the signs of the in-breaking of God's kingdom manifest in the mission and work of Jesus (or of the Seventy empowered by him), who possesses God's authority. The πάντα refers to the fulness of Christ's authority which is expressed in the ταῦτα, the works which reveal to those who can see it, the νῆπιοι, the in-breaking

1 See S. Légasse "La Révélation aux ΝΗΠΙΟΙ " R.B. 67 (1960), 321-348; p.322 note 4 for relevant literature, Jésus et L'Enfant, p.121ff.

2 J. Dupont Gnosis Louvain 1949, pp.58-9; S. Hanson The Unity of the Church in the New Testament Uppsala 1946, pp.34-5.

3 So Norden Agnostos Theos p.288 though for him it is a matter of Jesus thanking God for making known to the νῆπιοι the secret knowledge he himself possessed. See the discussion by M.J. Suggs Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's Gospel Cambridge Mass. 1970, p.71ff.

of the kingdom. In this, "tradition" is dynamic eschatological event, the coming of the kingdom in the person of Jesus to whom πάντα παρεδόθη . We may also note a further link in the common origin both of the revelation to the νῆπιος and the authority of Christ, namely God - that which is revealed and that which is imparted παρεδόθη have a common basis. It is therefore a tradition which contrasts sharply with the teachings of the rabbis, being marked by authority (7.28 cf. Mark 1.22, 27). Matthew, reflecting the controversy between church and Judaism over the right interpretation of the Law, seems to have something of this in mind at 11.25ff, so that the νῆπιος is a description of the church in consolation and exhortation. Before examining this further, however, we may first enquire about the background of the term νῆπιος and about the identity of those thus described.

We may follow the majority of scholars here¹ and locate the saying in Jewish wisdom-apocalyptic teaching rather than Hellenistic gnosis (Norden). We have already found reason to criticise Norden on the grounds that πάντα does not refer to teachings in the sense of Christ's full knowledge of God, but to his fulness of authority; on the positive side the pattern of the saying may be akin to the Jewish "berakah",²

1 W.D. Davies The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount Cambridge 1964, p.208ff and literature there; "Knowledge in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Matt. 11.25-30" H.T.R. 46 (1953), 113-139; J. Dupont Les Béatitudes 2 Bruges 1969, pp.143-218 "Le Privilège des Petits Enfants"; A. Feuillet "Jésus et la Sagesse Divine d'après les Évangiles Synoptiques" R.B. 62 (1955), 161-196; B. Rigaux "Révélation des Mystères et Perfection à Qumran et dans le N.T." N.T.S. 4 (1957-8), 237-262; W. Grundmann "Die ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in der urchristlichen Paränese" N.T.S. 5 (1958-9), 188-205; Suggs Wisdom p.83ff. cf. also Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.145ff.

2 Dupont Les Béatitudes 2, p.187, who notes further Hebraic points.

and it is also thoroughly eschatological in emphasis. In the Psalms the simple are the special concern of God, e.g. Ps. 19.7, 116.6, 119.130; in Ps. 131 the psalmist describes his attitude in terms of a trusting child,¹ and along with the weak and the poor are classed the "אֲנָשִׁים" for whom God has an especial care. In Daniel, one finds a pattern of revelation by which God makes known his secrets to Daniel and his companions and conceals them from the wise men of Babylon (1.3, 15, 2.23 (LXX)).² At Qumran,³ and especially in the Hodayoth there is an emphasis on those who are poor, the "אֲנָשִׁים אֲנָשִׁים" coupled to a consistent concept of a special revelation to the community, a particular understanding of the Law which renders them "perfect of way" and prepares them for the eschatological conflict (1QH 7.26-7, 5.13, 2.8, 9.27, 18.14).

Both Légasse⁴ and Dupont⁵ rightly point out that in Proverbs the simple are held in very low regard, and at Qumran also - only at 1QpHab. 12.4 is the community perhaps termed this, but this is also open to dispute;⁶ the Covenanters are certainly not simple but on the contrary possess a special insight. More generally,

1 I. Abrahams Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels 2nd Series, Cambridge 1924, p.118.

2 See L. Cerfaux "Les Sources Scripturaires de Matt. 11.25-30" E.T.L. 30 (1954), 740ff, 31 (1955), 331ff. Also "La Connaissance des Secrets du Royaume d'après Matt. 13.11 et Parallèles" N.T.S. 2 (1955-6), 238-249.

3 J. Dupont "Les πτωχοὶ τοῦ πνεύματος de Matthieu 5.3 et les 'אֲנָשִׁים אֲנָשִׁים' de Qumran" Neutestamentliche Aufsätze Festschrift J. Schmidt Regensburg 1963, 53-68.

4 "La Révélation" p.337ff.

5 Les Béatitudes p.199.

6 See Légasse "La Révélation" p.339; Dupont Les Béatitudes 2 p.200 note 8.

the simple are not admitted to the council of the congregation (CD 15.15ff). On the other hand, however, the child - teaching image does occur in an elaborated form with reference to the community, 1 QH 7.20-1, although it serves not so much as a description of the community as a reference to the special understanding afforded it by the Teacher. Moreover, in Matthew the *νήπιοι* are linked to other descriptions reminiscent of Qumran, e.g. *πρᾶξις* and serve as a consolation for the church. Again in the LXX the simple *νήπιοι* always occurs in a good sense, even at Prov. 1.32 at the expense of completely altering the Hebrew. So also although at 4 Ezra 12.38 we find "thou shalt teach them to the wise of the people, whose hearts thou knowest are able to comprehend and keep these mysteries",¹ which would appear to be the opposite of Matt. 11.25, the wise man in this context is also "the humble one" who trusts God, making *νήπιοι* and wise virtually the same.²

Since at v.25 therefore the *νήπιοι* are contrasted with the "wise and understanding" the question is who are the *νήπιοι* ?

1) The people generally - Such an interpretation would agree with Luke's placing of it after the mission of the Seventy. Thus, E. Werner³ takes *νήπιοι* as a reference to the "'am ha'aretz", those on the fringe who are excluded from salvation, especially the peoples of Galilee over against the *σοφοί* and *συνετοί*, the learned Jews

1 R.H. Charles Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha II p.615.

2 The contrast is between the worldly wise and those who know God's secret. See Suggs Wisdom, Christology and Law p.83ff.

3 E. Werner The Sacred Bridge London 1959, p.18, p.42 note 3.

of Jerusalem. The *νήπιοι* are the "Galilean backwoodsmen", (cf. John 7.49, Acts 4.13, 1 Cor. 1.26). One finds occasionally a strong dislike of the ignorant on the part of the scholars, e.g. Aboth 2.6 "an ignorant man (i.e. "'am haaretz") cannot be saintly",¹ and certainly Jesus kept company with many so called, with "sinners". Whether or not, however, this saying reflects the actual state of affairs, that Jesus found more response from the crowds than the Jewish leaders (as is perhaps reflected in Luke's account), as it stands in Matthew, one is hesitant about finding any better disposition towards Jesus' message on the part of the crowd as such; a) Matthew makes a distinction between the disciples and the crowd (13.11ff, 5.1); b) the wise are not condemned simply for that reason, nor the crowd simply favoured for their ignorance, i.e. it is not simply intellect which is the basis of the contrast here but rather attitude - the wise put their trust in their learning and cannot see, while the *νήπιοι* are those who acknowledge their need. Certainly the reason for such a privileged revelation lies in the *εὐδοκία* of God but that does not mean that it says nothing also of the *νήπιοι* themselves.²

2) The Twelve Disciples - or, in the case of Luke, the Seventy; this is the view put forward by A. Denis.³ Thus, at Matt. 10.1 Jesus calls the Twelve and gives them power to heal and instructions on how to undertake their mission, and the revelation to the *νήπιοι* /

1 Transl. H. Danby The Mishnah London 1958, p.448; see also J. Jeremias Jerusalem in the time of Jesus London 1969, iib, pp. 122-130.

2 See Dupont Les Béatitudes 2, p.212.

3 "L'Investiture Apostolique par 'Apocalypse'" R.B. 64 (1957), 492-515.

disciples is the confirmation by God of their peculiar office. With this, however, one finds difficulties: a) Denis somewhat arbitrarily divides v.25-27 as referring to the disciples, v.28-9 to the crowd; b) he takes no account of the differences between Gal. 1, the starting point of his thesis "L'Investiture Apostolique par 'Apocalypse'" and this saying of Jesus. It is not the authority of the Twelve as a special group within the church that is here in question, i.e. the revelation to the *νηπιοι* is not the confirmation of the disciples' office, but the making known by God to the simple who can see it of the inbreaking of the Kingdom in the person of Jesus; c) above all, Denis seems to neglect the Matthean idea of the disciples as portraying the true nature of discipleship to the church. If Werner's interpretation fails to take account of the distinction between the disciples and the crowd, so Denis fails to maintain the link between the disciples and Christians generally - especially in Chap. 10 where the calling of the Twelve and the issuing of directives to them shade off into exhortation to the church as a whole (v.17-9).¹ So also 28.19-20 points not so much to the continuing of the disciples as an authoritative group within the church as to the general task of the church's teaching and discipleship in Christ's name in the world. We cannot, therefore, restrict the *νηπιοι* to the Twelve alone, but must widen the meaning to include Christians generally.

3) Christians generally - If one is correct in placing Matthew as a whole against the background of controversy between the church and the Jews in the post 70 A.D. era,² in which the gospel

1 See G. Bornkamm "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew" in Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew's Gospel - G. Bornkamm G. Barth, H. Held, London 1963, p.18ff; G. Barth "Matthew's Understanding of the Law" in Tradition and Interpretation p.99ff.

2 G.D. Kilpatrick The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew Oxford 1950, cited with approval by Bornkamm Tradition and Interpretation p.22.

seeks to set out the true righteousness of God and the true nature of discipleship in obedience to God's messiah, then the $\nu\eta\pi\iota\sigma\iota$ would serve a strong hortatory and consolatory purpose.

The controversy between church and Judaism is apparent just here at v.29 in the invitation to share Christ's yoke. The contrast between the $\nu\eta\pi\iota\sigma\iota$ who know the secret of God's revelation over against the $\sigma\omicron\phi\omicron\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron\iota$,¹ the scribes, is made clear here in the contrast between Jesus' yoke which is easy² and other yokes, the bearing of which is burdensome. We may briefly consider here in what ways it serves as consolation and exhortation.

a) Consolation - The yoke of Christ is contrasted with the burdensome yoke of the scribal interpretation of the Law, so that one is aware of the tension between church and Judaism at this point - whose tradition is correct? (For the pious Jew, tradition by which the Law is interpreted is also accorded the status of Torah.³) For Matthew, Jesus teaches with authority (7.28 cf 21.23), he is the one empowered from God (11.27); at 5.22 the decisive $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$ breaks through the scribal traditions $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\rho\rho\acute{\epsilon}\theta\eta$ and at 15.2 the authority he has received ($\kappa\alpha\pi\epsilon\delta\acute{\omicron}\theta\eta$ 11.27) abolishes what the Pharisees have received. This authority is passed on to

1 The disciples also possess understanding but just in the context of being simple, Barth Tradition and Interpretation pp.105-112. On the "wise" see Dupont Les Beattitudes 2, p.191ff. Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.231ff.

2 Lit. $\chi\omicron\eta\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ cf. 1 Peter 2.2 in which the Christ-milk is also $\chi\omicron\eta\sigma\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ although there is absent there any idea of Jewish-Christian controversy. $\chi\upsilon\gamma\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$ would seem to indicate contrast with other yokes, see Betz "Logion of Easy Yoke" p.22ff.

3 W.G. Kümmel "Jesus und der jüdische Traditions-gedanke" Z.N.W. 33 (1934), 105-30, esp. p.112.

the church (16.19, 18.18) so that the disciples can even replace the scribes (13.52, 23.34) who are blinded and suspect (15.14, 23.16, 16.12.)¹

Behind this, one notes, so far as possible, that Jesus himself appears to stand in a remarkable freedom not only toward interpretations of the Law and the traditions, but the Law itself (cf. 5.38). He is Lord, so to speak, not only of tradition but of Scripture itself. This Matthew has perhaps not wholly succeeded in fitting to his picture of the church's claim to interpret and fulfil the Law. Thus, alongside the authoritative ἐγὼ δεῖ is set the Law's total validity (cf. the stress on "all" at 3.15, 5.18, 23.3, 28.20), and over against the criticism of the Pharisaic traditions (15.1ff, 16.6, 11) is set the validity of their teaching and their right to teach (23.2). We cannot, of course, go into all the many problems that are raised here, beyond noting that it lies behind our passage at this point, as is clear from Matthew's appending the invitation, v.28ff, to the logia of the revelation to the νῆπιοι and Jesus' claim to full authority.

The νῆπιοι then, it is suggested, in contrast to the "wise" Jewish teachers, serves as a consolation that the church knows Jesus to be the bearer of God's authority and the one who heralds the inbreaking of the Kingdom of Heaven. Since it is to the νῆπιοι that God reveals his truth, the church, in sharing with Jesus a fellowship of lowliness (sharing the yoke of one who is πραῦς καὶ

1 Matthew perhaps also looks to another tendency, that of anti-nomianism and the abolition of the Law altogether - see Barth Tradition and Interpretation p.63ff, p.159ff; criticised by J. Rohde Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists London 1968, p.56ff.

ταπεινός v.29) knows him as the one to whom all authority has been given. Thus Jesus who brings near the Kingdom is *πραῦς καὶ ταπεινός* and it is to the poor in spirit (5.1) that the Kingdom belongs, which is what is revealed to the *νῦπιοι*. The church also, in sharing Jesus' lowliness, fulfils the Law, and so also for Matthew the Beatitudes stand as an outline of the standard of entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.¹

We may perhaps strengthen this further by noting that Matthew applies to the church the theme of righteous obedience which he attaches to Jesus.² Thus he makes much of Jesus as the meek King, the one who is lowly and yet possesses God's full authority; as God's righteous one who fulfils the Law and invites others to share his yoke in the service of the Kingdom, the church claims to fulfil the Law also and to be righteous in following him in lowly obedience. Thus at 5.11 persecution for righteousness' sake is the same as suffering for Jesus' sake. The context of this theme of joy in suffering has been shown by Nauck³ to be that of the righteous man who, though now suffering, will yet be vindicated by God; thus we may strengthen the consolatory nature of 11.25ff by understanding the Christian as one who is righteous in following Jesus and in sharing his yoke, in the knowledge of Jesus' authority and his own

1 Barth Tradition and Interpretation p.60.

2 This may be part of the background to the difficult 11.27, what K. von Hase describes "wie ein Aerolith aus dem johanneischen Himmel gefallen", Geschichte Jesu Leipzig 1876, p.422. Thus Suggs interprets it against the background of the righteous man who knows God and is vindicated in face of his adversaries, cf. Wisdom 2.13, 16, Wisdom, Christology and Law p.89ff.

3 "Freude im Leiden" p.68ff.

vindication by God.¹ This theme of joy in suffering, suffering for righteousness' sake is an important one also for 1 Peter as we shall see, only there the controversy between church and Judaism is no longer felt and the church has wholly appropriated the epithets of Israel.² So also in 1 Peter the "conflict" between traditions is in the form of a contrast between the gospel and former gentile ways, and not between the church's authority in its worship of Christ and Judaism.

b) Exhortation - If the revelation to the νήπιοι serves as a consolation about the rightness of the church's claim about Jesus, it serves also as an exhortation. Over against the traditions of the scribes stands the authority of Jesus which the church also receives in her acknowledgement of him as Lord. But this authority of the church lies not only in the content of Jesus' teaching but in his person. Thus the mysteries of the Kingdom ταῦτα v.25 are inseparable from him who reveals them πάντα v.27, and the education of the νήπιοι lies accordingly in the μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. This understanding of the content of tradition as ultimately a person, as confessional, distinguishes Jesus and the disciples both from the general pattern of education in Judaism

1 One notes in the Psalms an occasional link between God's care for the simple man and that man described as obedient and righteous, e.g. Ps.119.131ff, cf. Wisdom of Solomon 2.10ff, 3.4ff.

2 In Matthew the suffering for righteousness' sake probably has a general meaning, almost as in 1 Peter 4.16 suffering as a Christian, but if we are right in linking it to 11.25ff then there may be an echo of church-Jewish controversy over Torah obedience; contrast D.R.A. Hare The Theme of Jewish Persecutions of Christians in the Gospel according to St. Matthew Cambridge 1967, p.130ff. Matthew makes explicit the link between suffering for righteousness' sake and following Jesus by adding "falsely", cf. 1 Peter 3.14.

and from the similarities to what we find in Qumran. In both it is really the teaching which is important as the bond between teacher and pupil, and at Qumran this would presumably be the pesher traditions. Whether or not v.25 existed separately describing Jesus as the revealer of eschatological secrets,¹ rather after the manner of the Teacher at Qumran, Matthew (and Luke) links it to a claim about Jesus' person so that the revelation by which the Law is reinterpreted in the church belongs to the radical demand of the Lord as part of a call to discipleship. (So also within the church teaching is necessary, but the disciples are teachers only within the context of being disciples of Jesus; they are scribes of the Kingdom but only as disciples of him who, as Lord, proclaims the Kingdom, cf. 10.24ff).

If, then, the church exercises its authority only in the context of discipleship, it is discipleship in the sense of sharing Christ's humility and lowliness. Thus, any claim to righteousness and to fulfil the Law is inseparable from this understanding of Christ - the royal invitation to share his yoke comes from the King who is meek and humble (cf. 21.5, 16). The difficult question of how Christ's yoke can be called light when he only makes the Law's demand more radical is perhaps best answered in this context of humility, of knowing one's need and dependence before God and of giving up all claim to status² - the self-effacing command of love which for Matthew sums up the Law³ also points in this direction.

1 See Suggs Wisdom, Christology and Law p.87ff.

2 Betz "Logion of Easy Yoke" p.23ff.

3 See Bornkamm Tradition and Interpretation p.31.

So also at 16.13 Peter's confession and the delegation of authority to the church is closely linked by Matthew to the necessity of discipleship in suffering and humility. The way of Jesus becomes the way of the church in the world, the experiences of the Lord realise themselves in the life of the church afresh, since what the $\nu\eta\lambda\iota\omicron\iota$ have received is ultimately a person and a life. In the introductory chapter we noted how indispensable tradition was for historical existence - this Matthew seems to be stating in his own way, indicating that answering the claim of the gospel one becomes a part of it, so that the experiences of Christ become one's own.

Matt. 21.16f Here the other saying with reference to the $\nu\eta\lambda\iota\omicron\iota$ in the gospel again shows this paraenetic use. It is paralleled in Luke 19.39. The context in Luke is different and is perhaps preferable - the whole point of Matthew's quotation depends on the LXX, and the presence of the blind and the lame within the Temple poses difficulties.¹ On the other hand, the reference to the acclamation by children in Matthew may be preferable to Luke's disciples and would also provide a play in Aramaic between "child" and "stone".² Also, the quotation in Matthew of $\nu\eta\lambda\iota\omicron\varsigma$ would fit well with the context " $\nu\eta$ - $\epsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$ ", not yet able to speak and yet giving forth praise.³

1 T.W. Manson The sayings of Jesus London 1964, p.220; Bultmann History of the Synoptic Tradition p.34; H. Strack and P. Billerbeck Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch i p.606ff. cf. Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.43ff, 246ff.

2 See M. Black An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts, 3rd ed. Oxford 1967, p.107; Bultmann History of the Synoptic Tradition p.34.

3 Hastings Dictionary of the Bible "Babe" Edinburgh 1901, I, p.212.

B. Lindars detects again here what he terms the "doctrine of the élite", of the privileged position of the disciples and of the correctness of the church's claim about Jesus as part of an apologetic motif.¹ This, then, would link very closely with what we have found at 11.25ff. Again, the children are contrasted with the wise in the form of the Jewish leaders (21.15) and hail him who is lowly as king. One may detect a certain Matthean emphasis in placing the acclamation right in the heart of Judaism in the Temple, and in a context when τυφλοί and χωλοί come to him, representative with the children of what is insignificant and weak, the νήπιοι.

The νήπιοι therefore serve as a description of the church and of discipleship; they are the lowly righteous ones who, knowing God's secret, fulfil the Law in obedience to Jesus as Christ. Continuing this theme of lowly obedience, we may here consider another group of sayings: God reveals the secret of his Kingdom to the νήπιοι, and one must become "as a little child" ὡς παιδίον in order to enter the Kingdom. In what does the comparison consist?

2. ὡς παιδίον

Concerning the παιδεία sayings generally, there exists a certain confusion which makes their interpretation rather problematic.² By way, therefore, of summary and for some initial clarification one may detect certain strands within the group as a whole: a) the child with reference to entry into the Kingdom, e.g. Mk. 10.15, Matt. 18.3 cf. Mk. 10.14c, Matt. 19.14; b) the child with reference to status within the Kingdom, e.g. Matt. 18.1,4,

1 New Testament Apologetic London 1961, p.167ff.

2 See generally Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.17ff, 187ff.

cf. Mk. 9.33-5; c) the child with reference to the nature of service within the Kingdom, e.g. Mk. 9.37, Matt. 18.5ff, to which category one should link that other group of sayings, concerning the *μικροί*. In what follows we shall be concerned mainly with the first group, the child and entry into the Kingdom.

In Mk. 9.33ff the context is a squabble amongst the disciples over pre-eminence - in Matthew, Chap. 18, the question becomes a theological one, Matthew frequently altering Mark's portrait of the disciples as blind and uncomprehending. 9.37 does not seem to fit too well with the preceding, and v.36 also does not fit well with v.35 or v.37, unless with M. Black one detects an underlying Aramaic link between *διάκονος* and *παιδίον*.¹ The logical connection with v.36 seems to come with 10.15. In Matthew, the connections are somewhat rough, though they appear to be better integrated and serve along with Chap. 18 as a whole as advice to the church. 18.3 is not fully worked in since *παιδία* is plural; v.4 links up with v.2, and v.5 leads on to the idea of receiving a child as Christ himself. Luke's version also strives for harmony, though the idea of receiving a child as Christ himself intrudes somewhat, 9.48a, and the *γάρ* of v.48c does not necessarily fit too well with the preceding (v.48b may perhaps be an expansion and correction of Mk. 9.37b). In the three strands that have been isolated above, perhaps the first and third became linked through the common "receiving" as well as dealing with the subject of the child, but they are separate in so far as the first deals with

1 An Aramaic Approach p.264; see also "The Marcan Parable of the Child in the Midst" E.T. 59 (1947-48), 14-16; and the comment in the same volume by T.F. Glasson "The Marcan Parable of the Child in the Midst" p.166, contrast Dupont Les Béatitudes 2, p.163, note 1.

receiving as a child, the third receiving a child. Moreover, the first and second may be considered as parables¹ while the third refers to actual children.

As to the nature of the comparison in ὡς παιδίον, several answers have been given, and certainly one cannot claim any dogmatic conclusion.

1) Echoes of a baptismal theme: a) Jewish proselyte practice - in Judaism a proselyte who has been baptised is described as a newly born child, with a double reference both to the fact that he is without sin and also that he has no past.² Such an interpretation here, however, does not seem to be suitable "unless you become sinless, begin a new existence" - for the gospels child status is a necessary pre-condition of entry into the Kingdom, whereas for Judaism it is a description of the situation following baptism into the faith.³

b) Some detect, especially in the Matthean form, 18.3, a similarity with Johannine ideas of being born anew. So, e.g., Justin at an early date apparently conflated 18.3 and John 3.3
 ἂν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, οὐ μὴ εἰσελθῆτε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν
 τῶν οὐρανῶν, Apol. 1, 61, 4;⁴ cf. Clement of Alexandria
 ἦν γὰρ μὴ αὖθις ὥς τὰ παιδία γέννησθε καὶ ἀναγεννηθῆτε,
 ὥς φησιν ἡ γραφή - - - - Protrep. ix,

1 An Aramaic Approach p.264

2 Yeb. 48b, see further on 1 Peter 2.2; see J. Jeremias The Parables of Jesus London 1963, p.190ff.

3 One notes a possible view of Matt. 19.14 τοιοῦτον that the Kingdom not only belongs to such but consists of such.

4 J.M. Robinson "The formal Structure of Jesus' Message" in Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation. Essays in honour of O. Piper, London 1962, pp.91-110, esp. pp.106-7; also R. Brown St. John's Gospel, Anchor Bible 29, New York 1966, p.141ff.

82, 4.¹ There is, however, a difference between becoming a child and being born again; childhood and rebirth are not necessarily connected. Cullmann's theory of a baptismal context for 19.14 is still disputed² and we need not necessarily find a baptismal context here. One also prefers Dupont's interpretation of ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε 18.3, as "change"³ to Kümmel's strong "be converted"⁴ or Jeremias' weak "become again".⁵ There is a note of challenge in Matthew's form which fits well with Chap.18 generally as an address to the church.

2) Other solutions concentrate on the idea of the insignificance and unimportance of the child. Thus, if Mk. 10.15 is the same logion as Matt. 18.3, then ὅς παιδίον could refer either to one's treatment of children, i.e. what is insignificant, as in some way determinative of one's relation to the Kingdom, or as a description of oneself and one's own self-understanding in relation to the Kingdom. The former is argued by W. Clarke⁶ who suggests translating "receive as one receives a child", and a rather similar view is put forward by F. Schilling⁷ that we should take it to mean

1 See A. von Harnack "Die Terminologie der Wiedergeburt und verwandter Erlebnisse in der Ältesten Kirche" T. u. U. xlii 97-143, esp. 98ff.

2 "Les Traces d'Une Vieille Formule Baptismale" R.H.P.R. 17 (1937), 424-434; see Dupont Les Béatitudes 2, p.158.

3 Les Béatitudes 2, p.170; "Matthieu 18.3; ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὅς τὰ παιδιά" in Neotestamentica et Semitica studies in honour of M. Black, Edinburgh 1969, pp.50-60.

4 Promise and Fulfilment London 1961, p.196.

5 Parables p.190.

6 New Testament Problems London 1929, p.36ff.

7 "What means the Saying about Receiving the Kingdom of God as a little Child?" E.T. 77 (1965), 56-8. cf. R. Leaney "Jesus and the Symbol of the Child" E.T. 66 (1954-5), 91-92.

"receiving the Kingdom as if it were a child". Thus for him it is comparable to other parables of Jesus in which the Kingdom is likened to a sower and so on. In favour of such an interpretation we should note the unusualness of the comparison, comparable perhaps to other images, e.g. leaven Matt. 13.33 used here (Q) in a favourable way. So also such an interpretation might fit a possible "Sitz im Leben" of treatment, for example, of the children of missionaries, the receiving of the children of those who preach in Christ's name is to open oneself to the coming Kingdom.

On the other hand, such an interpretation brings this group of sayings about the child very close to that third group which we noted: the child with reference to the nature of service and his treatment within the Kingdom. Also, perhaps παιδῶν is better understood syntactically as nominative, so that it is a description of one's own attitude to self in face of the Kingdom. We are not, however, forced here to choose between these two views, but note simply that the main point centres on the insignificance of the child. Before going on to examine this further, we may note another kind of interpretation however.

3) Some interpret "receive as a little child receives", taking this variously with reference to a child's simplicity, total trust, guilelessness, openness and so on. The difficulty here is just this lack of precision and one is easily led into speculation which savours too much of psychology. Broadly speaking, one may locate here also the particular answer of Jeremias that the meaning is to be found in Jesus' teaching about God as "Abba"¹ - this is

1 The Parables of Jesus p.191.

the child's word and all must speak of God in this child-like way who would enter the Kingdom. Certainly Jesus does speak of God in such an intimate way, and the use of 'Abba' in addressing God was continued in the early church Rom. 8.15, Gal. 4.6,¹ and one can point to Ps. 131.2 and the image of the child there as one of trust in the Lord. However, one wonders if Jeremias is correct here: a) it is those who are within the Kingdom who call God "Abba" rather than those summoned to enter into the Kingdom; b) Jeremias admits that calling God "Abba" does mean belittling oneself in the sense of confessing one's guilt before God, detecting a common Aramaic original, but how does this square with the nature of discipleship as modelled on Jesus? He too is *πρᾶτος* and *ταπεινός* but not surely in the matter of confessing his guilt in calling God "Abba".

We may note here, returning for a moment to Matt. 11.25, that Grundmann² applies Jeremias' view to the *νήπιος* logion - Jesus refers to God as Father and describes himself as humble and lowly. Jesus receives the secret of his Father, "der Wille des Vaters ist der Inhalt seines Lebens ----, und darum ist der Vater der Inhalt seiner Offenbarung an die *νήπιοι*",³ v.27c. With this, however, one finds difficulty: a) Jesus' calling God Father is natural enough as a form of address and emphasises rather the intimacy of source and recipient of the "tradition"; b) it is

1 Though, as we shall see, in Paul it is linked to the concept of adoption and life in the Spirit and is quite opposed to a state of *νηπιότης*.

2 "Die *ΝΗΠΙΟΙ* in der Paränese" p.201ff.

3 "Die *ΝΗΠΙΟΙ* in der Paränese" p.203.

difficult to connect ταῦτα with a revelation of God as Father. The revelation of the Father through the Son v.27c (ἀποκάλυψε cf. v.25 ἀπεκάλυψε) is not the knowledge of the secret of God's Fatherhood so much as the church's claim to God's power at work in Christ (v.27a πάντα) evidenced in the δυνάμεις v.21 (ταῦτα v.25).

4) One prefers finally that interpretation which finds the meaning of the saying in the relation of the child to humility, whether what is in view is receiving like a child in terms of one's inner attitude or receiving something external to oneself as one would receive a child. We may seek in this a link with the group of sayings, that God gives the Kingdom to the insignificant and that before God there is no merit in one's own achievement.¹ The image as in the case of the revelation to the νήκιοι points both to the εὐδοκία of God in revealing his secrets and in making the Kingdom known, and also says something about the recipients. There is indeed no merit in being a νήκιος or παιδίον , but that is precisely the point for it is to those who own themselves as such that God makes himself known.

Certainly in Judaism the child by and large is not used as an image of humility, for children are not naturally humble.² It is, however, just this insignificance and low regard in which the child was held which makes the image here striking, and serves as a description of the Christian's attitude - to those who are humble and who own their smallness, the Kingdom of Heaven belongs, they are the " עֲבָדַי " the πρᾶεῖς for whom God cares.

1 See W. Grundmann Das Evangelium nach Markus Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 2 Berlin 1959, p.207.

2 See above p.64.

Thus, though the logion circulated independently from the saying on humility, see the rough connections especially in Mark, yet Matthew is correct in inserting 18.3 into the context of humility - humility characterises both entry into and existence within the Kingdom. E. Lohmeyer¹ links the παιδία to the νήπιοι on the basis of the child being ignorant and incapable of understanding, so that it is to the simple that God's revelation and Kingdom belong, and this is due to God's good pleasure. One prefers, however, to find the link in terms of humility if one is correct a) in explicating νήπιοι in relation to Christ who is πραύς and ταπεινός ; b) in linking the Beatitudes as entry to the Kingdom with the παιδία saying 18.3 and especially the 19.14 form which comes close to the Beatitude form.²

In contrast to the generally negative approach to the child in the Ancient World, Jesus' favourable attitude to the child both as a person in its own right and as an image of discipleship is noteworthy.³ In this, he stands perhaps in the prophetic line of the

1 Das Evangelium des Markus Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament Göttingen 1937, p.203.

2 Dupont Les Béatitudes 2, p.158.

3 On the other hand, the attitude to the child is not sentimental, as the parable of the children in the market place (Matt.11.16ff, Luke 7.31ff) does suggest perhaps a certain levity and immaturity of thought and understanding. Rather than try to interpret the parable in terms of its particular details, the Jews as the disgruntled spectators, the Baptist and his followers as those who wailed, and Jesus and the disciples as those who piped, it seems better to take the parable as a whole whose main point is failure to understand. So Légasse remarks "Le 'cas' sur lequel se greffe cette leçon est essentiellement celui qui consiste à ne pas comprendre une attitude donnée" (Jésus et L'Enfant p.301). Accordingly the refrain "we piped for you and you would not dance; we wept and wailed and you would not mourn" is to be seen as part of the game of charades, as if to say when the actions have not been understood "you have not grasped our mime". So in real life neither the Baptist nor Jesus has been understood. In terms of the parable's meaning the difference between Matthew (τοῖς ἑτεροῖς) and Luke (ἁλλήλοῖς) is not perhaps great therefore. See generally Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.289ff.

Old Testament which defended society's weaker members such as widows and orphans (Deut. 10.18, Ps. 68.5, Is. 1.23 etc.). Nor does Jesus exalt the child educationally as a pointer to the glories of learning the gospel message, after the manner of the Rabbis who extolled the school child only really to enhance the importance of the Torah. Rather the child is appreciated both for its own sake in itself, and as a living parable of the way God works in his concern for the lowly and insignificant. Thus Dupont remarks¹ "— non la psychologie merveilleuse des petits enfants ou les dispositions d'âme qui les caractérisent, mais les dispositions de Dieu à leur égard," cf. 3) above.

3. μικροί

In relation to our findings thus far on the image of the child in Matthew we may consider briefly this other description of "little ones".² One detects here the impetus of the tradition, Jesus as the humble king, God revealing to νήπιοι what he has given (παρεδόθη) to Jesus; and within the church, humility as the key to the Kingdom and the nature of it as both consolation and exhortation in discipleship.

In considering this group we may add to the interpretation of παιδίον with reference to entry into the Kingdom, the other two strands of status and service within the Kingdom. (above pp. 82 and 83).

a) Status - At Matt. 18.1ff Matthew removes Mark's setting of a squabble amongst the disciples and provides a context in which theological questioning and the nature of discipleship are more at issue. In answer to the question "who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Matthew first inserts the saying about the child in relation

1 Les Béatitudes 2, p.160.

2 See Légasse Jésus et L'Enfant p.51ff.

to entry to the Kingdom, v.3, and on the basis of this goes on to give an answer in v.4, with the connective οὖν . Thus, child status as regards entry to the Kingdom determines status within it. Perhaps if there is some connection between Jesus' lowliness and that of the disciples (cf. 10.24ff), there is also some connection with 23.8ff in that no one is to be called rabbi and hold an especial place as teacher but all are to be brothers and equals;¹ but perhaps it serves just a simple hortatory purpose, pleading for humility as the criterion of status. (Matthew omits Mark's introduction in 9.35)

b) Service - Since God concerns himself with what is small, so the church must treat properly its own παιδία and μικροί . Probably such advice was aimed at the proper treatment of children within the church² and so also originally the μικροί referred to children,³ but one cannot help seeing here an extension to Christians generally.⁴ Thus 18.6 seems to develop Mark 9.42 "one of these little ones that believe" and presumably Matt. 10.42 is a development of Mark 9.41 ὑμῶν , and we may also note the expansive 18.6 compared with 18.10 in Matthew itself. The μικροί sayings occur mostly in Matthew and are a designation of Christians - so J. Wellhausen remarks⁵ "Die μικροί sind die Christen insgesamt, nicht ein besonderer Teil von ihnen", i.e. children as such.

1 5.19 would seem to have a different import and perhaps refers to duties as a teacher within the congregation, cf. the disciples as "scribes".

2 So Bultmann History of the Synoptic Tradition p.145; Barth Tradition and Interpretation p.121ff.

3 But see O. Michel "Diese Kleinen" - eine Jüngerbezeichnung Jesu" T.S.K. 108 (1937-8), 401-415 for a contrary view.

4 So also Mark 10.14, Matt. 19.14 τοιοῦτων may not refer exclusively to children in the sense of "these and other children" but may also refer to adults, see Dupont Les Beattitudes 2, p.158.

5 Das Evangelium Matthaei Berlin 1904, p.92.

special group but to the church as a whole, the same is the case in this context of discipleship with the call to perfection. Thus we cannot argue that there is a double standard in Christian discipleship in Matthew so that the *νήπιοι* become a special group.

a) Matt. 19.21 - Traditional Catholic scholarship has found here a double standard, a special following of Christ within the ordinary Christian commitment. Rigaux¹ argues for a special group, those who sell their goods, a standard not required by the ordinary Christian, an "opus supererogatorium".² Certainly at first glance it does look as if there is a two-tier moral conduct, v.21 εἰ θέλεις -----, and especially when Matthew alters Luke's account by putting the reply "lack one thing" into the man's question, to which comes the answer "if you would be perfect". Also at Qumran, whose members are described as "perfect of way", one finds apparently a special inner group with a system of promotion and demotion (1 QS.5.24).

There are, however, serious arguments against a double standard, and any higher righteousness is for the church as a whole and not a special group. Whether or not one finds in *νεανίσκος* and *πτωχοί* any special meaning,³ such as neophyte and the community as a whole, certainly the Qumran community as a whole were described as "perfect" and the fulfilment of the Law was enjoined on all, and

1 "Révélation des Mystères" p.237ff. Contrast P.J. du Plessis Teleios Kampen 1959, p.168ff.

2 See Wellhausen Das Evangelium Matthaei p.98; Barth Tradition and Interpretation p.96, note 3.

3 On the whole it seems unlikely, though it is curious that the *νεανίσκος* has kept the Law *ἐκ νεότητος μου*. See Davies Setting p.206ff; C. Spicq "La Place ou le Rôle des Jeunes dans Certaines Communautés Neotestamentaires" R.B. 76 (1969), 508-27.

while the candidate, on becoming a member, had to surrender his goods to the community (1 QS. 1.11), poverty seems to have been a general requirement of various sects at that time.¹ So far as the text itself goes, the man in refusing "to be perfect" rejects not a higher standard but life itself, v.17: there is only one standard in face of the Kingdom's demand, a demand which again, as at 11.25, is bound up with following Jesus; God's revelation is to the *νηπιου* and here, taking "if you would be perfect" v.21 with "if you would live" v.17, then this is the standard of discipleship in following Jesus. Since, for Matthew, the disciples serve as examples for the whole congregation, there cannot be a double standard but only one demand for discipleship from all.² Perhaps Jesus may have taught on two levels - to the crowd and to the disciples - in that he calls for all to repent in face of the Kingdom and yet gathers about him a special band; yet, as we have seen, the *νηπιου* are not the crowd generally so that here the issue of two levels within the church does not arise.

b) The "what do I lack?" corresponds to the "more" of 5.47 (cf. 5.20), the standard of perfection for the whole community which is also the fulfilling of the Law as demanded by the Messiah in the antithetical *ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν*; the "doing extra" which makes all the difference between discipleship and non-discipleship. So also, therefore, 5.48 points to a single standard, Matthew

1 See Davies "Knowledge in DSS and Matthew 11.25-30" p.115ff.

2 One rejects attempts at 19.21 to find Jesus here "scolding" the man for his youthful enthusiasm and his boasting that he had kept the Law. Matthew frequently removes the obtuseness of the disciples in Mark, G. Strecker Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit Göttingen 1962, p.191ff.

altering Luke's "merciful" which is perhaps a more traditional epithet.¹ Debate, of course, has continued for a long time about "perfectionism" here,² much of which has abstracted 5.48 both from its immediate context and from Matthean theology as a whole. The best view would seem to be a call in face of the Kingdom, noting how God reveals his secrets to the *νήπιοι* and here God is himself the standard of the Christian's actions, but both are linked to following Christ; and just as God cares for all and has no favourites, so also must they be as caring and as impartial. This is a feature brought out at 25.31ff and in the care of the *μικροί*, since the Messiah who demands the "more" of Christian discipleship is also the one who is secretly received in the receiving of others.

With much of this, as we have seen, especially in the connection between the revelation to the *νήπιοι* and the call to perfection as the pattern of discipleship, the community at Qumran seems to offer a close parallel. Here, also, the community possesses a special knowledge in conjunction with obedience to the Law and in an intensely eschatological setting. (Matt. 5.48 and the imitation of God is, of course, very much based on the Law as radically interpreted by Jesus.³) Beyond, however, the distinction that Qumran demanded complete obedience to all the Law while Jesus

1 T.W. Manson The Sayings of Jesus p.347; G. Dalman The Words of Jesus Edinburgh 1909, p.204.

2 See P.J. du Plessis Teleios p.168ff.

3 See Davies Setting p.212; I. Abrahams Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels 2nd Series, p.138ff; H.J. Schoeps "Von der Imitatio Dei zur Nachfolge Christi" Aus frühchristlicher Zeit Tübingen 1950, pp.286-301.

demanding a deeper obedience,¹ we should note two other points in relation to the νήπιος: a) the special revelation of Qumran is seen in the pesher traditions by which they interpreted the Law, and although it was given as they thought by a divinely inspired teacher, it was his teaching and not his person that was decisive: here Qumran is in accord with normative teacher-pupil practice in Judaism. Matthew, however, in linking 11.25 to v.26ff, declares Jesus to be the Lord who transcends both Law and interpretation, for his message is about the Kingdom, and obedience to the Law and its fulfilment is in obedience to him; b) the νήπιοι, while the recipients of God's favour (cf. 13.11), are not an elect band like the Qumran community, assured of salvation amid the iniquity of the world. The church itself must face judgment, and the standard is that of faithful discipleship (11.29) and faithful service (25.31ff).

Three additional notes -

a) The child in the Gospel of Thomas Here the child image features in several logia² and is very much linked to Thomas' gnostic/ascetic understanding. The logia are 4, 21, 22, 37, 46, and in all of them one finds a strange ascetic tendency. In log. 22 becoming a child and entering the Kingdom are linked together to a being enlightened, a gnosis which has to do with sexual asceticism; becoming a child denotes a state of pre-fall, asexual innocence (cf. log. 114). The children here are sucking

1 Davies Setting p.216.

2 See H. Kee "Becoming a Child in the Gospel of Thomas" J.B.L. 82 (1963), 307-314; E. Haenchen Der Weg Jesu Berlin 1966, p.348.

children, and whether Thomas here retains an historical reminiscence simply or aims at something more along the lines of a Jewish idea of pupils being called sucklings, Taanith 9a, so as to refer to secret teaching or gnosis, is hard to say.

For the other logia, log. 37 again denotes childhood as a return to a pre-fall innocence; log 21 has the idea of stripping off clothes as the gaining of enlightenment with the curious "giving back of the field" either as the moment of death or conversion; log. 4 perhaps recalls the vision of Isaiah 11.6ff, of the child playing innocently as part of the eschatological rule, but is linked to the androgynous man;¹ log. 46, with the link between the Baptist and becoming a little one, connects the Kingdom with primordial existence. Although a far cry from the image in the gospels, it perhaps serves to highlight the gospel use and to show how much this image was at work in early thought both heterodox and orthodox. It is also of interest to note that the sayings are linked fully with "becoming as a little one".

b) Mark 10.24 Only here² in the Synoptic gospels does Jesus explicitly call his disciples τέκνα as a term of address as opposed to those sayings about becoming as a child. Rather than taking this as an extension of the latter, we should regard it as reflecting the Jewish way of a rabbi addressing his pupils - frequently one finds the idea of a teacher being in the position of a father, e.g. b.Sanh.19b "when a man teaches the son of another

1 See A. Klijn "The 'Single One' in the Gospel of Thomas" J.B.L. 81 (1962), 271-278.

2 We may note Mk. 2.5, 5.34, cf. Matt. 9.22, which are similar but which are not explicitly addressed to the disciples.

the Torah, the Scripture treats him as if he had begotten him." This, as we shall see, is what we find in Paul, e.g. 1 Cor. 4.15, and perhaps it may be behind the frequent address of *τεχνίται* in 1 John, although there may be a hint there also of divine regeneration in the gospel which is a new idea or one at least not frequently found in normative Judaism.¹

Although the child image is not found in this way in Matthew, we may note the hint of another image often found in connection with the child-father one in relation to teaching and instruction, that of building.² There may be an echo of this at 10.25b and also, as we have already seen, there are similarities between the *νήπιοι* saying at 11.25 and the saying at 16.13ff (noting *οὐκ οδομήσω* v.18; we may also note 21.42). Thus, Jesus' teaching builds up the community, part of which teaching is presumably, as already noted, about the child and humility; however, in Matthew the child image itself, as a description of those who, as pupils, receive this instruction from Jesus, is absent (*νήπιοις* refers to God's revelation, not to the relation of Jesus to the disciples), nor is there any mention of Jesus begetting his pupils through such instruction.

c) Matt. 11.19c of Luke 7.35 In the Matthean form, v.19 may look back to v.2ff and the revelation of God's wisdom in Jesus' miracles; possibly there is present here a consolatory purpose on the part of the church that, though Jews reject both the Baptist

1 See the careful remarks of R. Brown St. John's Gospel New York (1966), pp.138-139. Presumably the Hebraic "children of obedience" at 1 Peter 1.13 is also to some extent under the influence of the language of regeneration used by the writer.

2 On this see below p.120 and p.193ff.

and Jesus, yet that is where God's wisdom really lies. The Lukan version "all her children" is better taken as a reference to the church rather than to the Jews, reflecting the idea of a teacher regarding his pupils as his sons (Prov. 1.8, 8.32; Ecclus. 1.2¹).

If it referred to the Jews then we would have to understand δικαιούν either a) in the sense of "condemn" so that the criticism is of Israel, the abode of wisdom (Ecclus. 48.11), rejecting wisdom, or b) in the sense of "justify" but that wisdom is justified against (ἀπό) her children. ἀπό however, seems better, denoting origin.

d) The child image in 1 John In 1 John, the writer frequently addresses his readers as "little children" (παῖδια, τέκνα which latter seems to be particularly Johannine²). As in the gospels, the description is used in a favourable way, and for the writer is interchangeable with another favourite description "beloved". It also denotes a particularly warm relationship between himself and the readers (τέκνα μου 2.1, cf. 1 Cor. 4.6). As in the Synoptic (Q) use of νήπιοι, they are as children the recipients of the knowledge and wealth of the gospel (2.14 cf. Matt. 11.25ff). Although there is no mention of the writer having begotten the readers through the preaching of the gospel to them and instructing them in it (1 Cor. 4.6), nevertheless he is concerned for their understanding of what they have received and their grasp of the faith (1.1ff, 5ff, 2.1ff) and as such they are his dear children. The description therefore is one both of endearment and of a right understanding which they share with the writer.

1 Strack Billerbeck Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch ii, p.559.

2 Reading τέκνα at Gal. 4.19.

There may also be present, however, a hint of the idea of divine regeneration in the description, which is not present either in the *νήπιου* of the gospels or (as we shall see) in the Pauline usage, but which is found at 1 Peter 2.2. The readers would then be "little children" not only in the sense of understanding the gospel but of owing their origin to it (cf. John 1.13) - so e.g. at 2.28 the "abiding in him" which is descriptive of being children is based on being "begotten of him"; as the Father has shown his love that they should be called children of God (3.1-2) so the necessity of love is required of them who have been begotten by him (4.7); and also at 2.12 their sinless status as little children should be linked to 3.9 and the necessity of sinlessness as befits those begotten of God. One surmises therefore that they are also "little children" (*τεχνία*) as *τέχνα θεοῦ* , begotten by him.

At 2.12ff, the writer uses three terms *τεχνία* / *παιδία* , *πατέρες* and *νεανίσκοι* . The passage occurs in a context in which after outlining certain of the standards and requirements set in the gospel, he turns for a moment to exhort the readers in what they know to be fundamentally true.

a) In view of the frequency of address to the readers as little children, it would seem most likely that there are only two groups in mind, of fathers and young men, with *τεχνία* / *παιδία* as a general introduction. This seems preferable to the idea of three groups divided according to age or proficiency, or even that the groups refer to all Christians corporately but from different perspectives.

b) We cannot of course go into all the problems of this passage;

no doubt the repetition of the exhortations is for emphasis, with slight variation in the second group, and the change from γοῶν to ἔργων is perhaps best taken as stylistic variation.¹

On the one hand then, all Christians share in the forgiveness of sins, and partake of the same faith in God as Father, and on the other within this, the different groups of old and young² have their own characteristic attributes by which to ward off the snares of the world. To the fathers belong the knowledge and experience of age, to the young men belong their own strength and also the indwelling power of God's word (2.14 cf. 3.9) by which they have won the victory over evil. And both exhortations are centred upon these twin fundamental claims of the forgiveness of sins and the knowledge of the Father which have been theirs from the very first in the gospel (1.1-2, 7).³

Westcott attempts to distinguish⁴ between τέχνη and παιδεία

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- 1 See C. Spicq "La Place ou le Rôle des Jeunes dans Certaines Communautés Néo-testamentaires" R.B. 76 (1969) 508-527, p.523, note 65.
 - 2 On the question whether there may be here a distinction not simply of age but of function within the church, amounting even to clergy and laity, see Spicq "La Place ou le Rôle des Jeunes" p.508ff, and especially pp.523-527 (cf. Acts 5.6, 10; Titus 1.7-9; 1 Peter 5.1ff).
 - 3 Spicq ("La Place ou le Rôle des Jeunes" p.526) traces a particular connection between the readers addressed as τέχνη and the claim (taking ὅτι as casual) that their sins are forgiven (2.12) through the Jewish idea of the sinlessness of the child: more particularly we might add, the description of the newly baptised person as a new-born child free from sin and guilt (see below p. 161 ff). This would be strengthened if in fact the writer is describing one of the fundamental claims realised by anyone on believing acceptance of the faith. On the other hand, the writer is concerned with his readers as children not simply with their situation then, on first accepting the faith, but with their attitude now to the gospel and its enduring claims, with their attitude, in face of the falsehood of the world, to Christ, in whom there is always both the forgiveness of sins and the knowledge of the Father.
 - 4 The Epistles of St. John (with a new introduction by F.F. Bruce) London 1966, p.61.

on the basis that *τεχνία* describes the idea of being bound to one another in the bond of natural kinship, while *παίδία* describes the recognition of our equal feebleness before the Father. This, however, seems over subtle, and the difference again may be no more than stylistic variation.

In summary then, we may say that for all the distinction between the two groups and their particular characteristics, both are embraced under the common description of the child, in whom the perfecting love of God is at work (4.17). Whether young or old, they are beloved children in their understanding of and persevering in the word given to them.

Having surveyed the use of the child image, particularly as it is found in Matthew's gospel, we may now summarise our findings:

a) It is not without significance that the image occurs particularly in this gospel, concerned as Matthew is with the church and the theme of discipleship. The revelation to the *νήπιος* shows us part of his understanding of this theme in which the church as a whole (there is no double standard) is seen to have the true understanding of God's will. In this the revelation is a consolation over against the rival claims of Judaism. It is, however, an understanding of God's will inseparable from allegiance to the person of Christ who makes it known (11.25); thus the *ταῦτα* v.25 refers to the works of Christ v.20ff, and also to the *πάντα* v.27 and the full authority of Christ. In this it is also an obligation, for as the exalted Christ (11.27, 28.18) is also the one who was lowly (11.29), so the church in herself receiving this authority (16.19) must share the yoke (11.29) and follow in the same manner (cf.10.24ff).

1 Strack Billerbeck Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch ii p.559.

It points then to a concept of tradition, παραδόθη, in which there is no thought of the church receiving it without involvement, no acquaintance with it without sacrifice. The revelation to the νήπιον unlike e.g. the secrets revealed to the Covenanters of Qumran or the particular insights on which the Corinthians prided themselves (whether or not this saying was known to them) is not a specialist esoteric knowledge to be guarded in secret and rejoiced over in private.

b) This would seem to be supported by the other uses of the child image as used by Matthew, the key factor again being lowliness and humility and the owning of one's need before God. The Kingdom belongs to the lowly and humble, and conduct within it is characterised by these qualities.

c) We may note the theological framework, so to speak, of the revelation to the νήπιον, just as becoming as a child is set as the standard of entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus' teaching reveals God's will (11.27c) and so also the church's confession of Jesus as Lord is due to God's action (v.27b), God knows the Son, God reveals his secret to the νήπιον (v.25). So it is God who reveals to Peter Jesus' messiahship (16.17), and at 28.18ff where the exalted Christ commands the church to continue his teaching, that summons to discipleship is set in a trinitarian context. Such a reminder as this may be salutary in view of Matthew's Old Testament roots and the struggle in progress between the church and Judaism over the Law and its correct interpretation. For the church, Jesus and the proclamation of God's Kingdom come within the wide context of the continuity and fulfilment of God's purpose, cf Matthew's frequent

"this is that which -----".

The question of continuity in face of the demand of the gospel in the present becomes an urgent one - "whose tradition is correct?" In this tension thrust up by the church's claim that their confession of Christ is a revelation from God (11.25) we should note that this may mean indeed a repudiation of the traditions of Judaism (15.1ff) and also a critical look at Scripture itself (5.21ff). On the other hand it may equally involve a recognition of the worth of tradition (23.3) and be Scripture's fulfilment (5.17ff). Whether or not this ambiguity is due to Matthew's failure fully to harmonise his sources, we should note that in the relationship between continuity and change which is involved in tradition, it may not necessarily be the case that tradition is discarded or overthrown every time. In this, Jesus may not always fit a revolutionary mould in which some modern views, which themselves simply follow a traditionalism of "anti-tradition", would wish to cast him. All that one can say is that in seeking the fulfilment of God's will in the present a crisis over tradition can and does occur.¹

1 See on this J. Barr Old and New in Interpretation London 1966, particularly p.157ff; and also below p.241.

2.

When we turn to Paul, especially 1 Corinthians, we find that he also is very much concerned with the problem of tradition and with the question of interpretation in the tradition process. Tradition here as it relates to the image of the child, 3.1, is ultimately Paul's gospel, and this involves his own place as an apostle authoritatively to impart it to them. In this, the question at 4.7 is crucial: "what have you that you have not received? And if you have received it why boast as if you had not?" Paul wrestles with his readers over a false understanding of the gospel. He is vexed at their failure to understand what he has given to them, a failure amply shown by the way in which their grasp of the gospel is reflected in their conduct.

Paul by contrast with Matthew uses the image of the child as a term of censure, and even Rom. 2.20 and 1 Cor. 13.11 are not wholly free from a pejorative tone. It is important, however, to ask in what way it is a term of censure, and in the following we are concerned mainly to seek an answer to this question. Since we shall be dealing mainly with 1 Cor., we have to ask whether Paul is rebuking his readers at 3.1ff not because they are babes but because they are still babes and had not progressed further, or whether he is (as it is hoped to show) in fact rebuking them for being childish because it is contrary to being ἐν πνεύματι. The contrast between νήπιοι and ἐν πνεύματι would then be that the readers as Christians and as recipients of the Spirit should realise what they have received and live mature spiritual lives (cf 1.4ff). Exploration of this matter will also involve the question of a) whether there

exists a double standard in the contrast between babe and mature, and b) in what way Paul's authority as an apostle operates in relation to the child image (Paul as father).

In 1 Cor. Paul, it would seem, is wrestling with a paradox that Christians who had been baptised and who had received the Spirit (1.13ff, 2.12 cf. 10.2) were yet behaving in an unspiritual manner.¹ We may, however, advance further than this to the fact that Paul is putting forward the nature of life in the Spirit against a false spirituality, since his opponents would claim very much to be in the Spirit. Behind the trouble at Corinth we should detect some kind of enthusiasm or "gnosis".

Although the unity of the letter has been called in question,² one prefers to accept it as a unity.³ Paul is dealing with several themes on a report and answer basis, but underneath it all there runs an undercurrent that the troubles stem in some way from the factions mentioned at 1.11. About these factions, Munck⁴ in reaction to the Tübingen school seems to have grossly underestimated their significance within the church, arguing indeed that there really were no factions and that it was all just a misunderstanding - because of Hellenistic influence the readers had seen in Paul,

1 See R. Schnackenburg "Christian Adulthood according to Paul" C.B.Q. 25 (1963), 354-370, esp. p.359.

2 See J. Héring The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians London 1962, p.xiff.

3 W.G. Kümmel Introduction to the New Testament London 1966, p.202ff; N.A. Dahl "Paul and the Church at Corinth according to 1 Cor. 1-4" in Christian History and Interpretation Studies for J. Knox, Cambridge 1967, pp.313-335.

4 Paul and the Salvation of Mankind London 1959. "The Church without Factions", Chap. 5.

Apollos and Peter philosophers with their own particular wisdom. Yet on the other hand, the attempts of Wilckens¹ and Schmithals² to find in their own way a full-grown gnosticism at work seem equally misleading for just that reason. One prefers a mediating position in which one may take the presence of division seriously but hold, at the same time, that these factions are not necessarily well defined.

Paul, over against the Corinthians' enthusiasm, sums up the gospel he had imparted to them as Christ crucified, a gospel centred upon the Cross. If we are right in understanding the letter as a unity, this description of his gospel as "the word of the Cross" (1.18ff) remains of central importance throughout and is directly related to the various troubles he confronts.³ Thus, through a denial of God's wisdom revealed in the Cross, the Corinthians boasted rather of their own wisdom and hence of themselves and of the flesh. Far from being τέλειοι,⁴ as if they were living wholly in the New Age, they were on the contrary ἀπαιχκοί and so were being quite childish really. Paul ironically wishes that they were childish in fleshly matters (14.20ff).

That νήπιος is used as a term of censure at 3.1 is not as obvious as it might seem, in that Paul is apparently looking back

1 U. Wilckens Weisheit und Torheit Tübingen 1959.

2 W. Schmithals Die Gnosis in Korinth Göttingen 1956.

3 See Dahl "Paul and the Church at Corinth" p.332; G. Bornkamm "On the Understanding of Christian Worship" in Early Christian Experience London 1969, pp.161-179, esp. p.166.

4 No doubt some of Paul's language reflects the argument of his opponents, a fact not perhaps sufficiently noted by du Plessis Teleios who argues strongly against a gnostic understanding p.178ff, cf. p.20ff.

historically to his first preaching of the gospel, 2.1ff. But

1) the transition in v.2b to v.3 and the heightening of *σαρκινοί* to *σαρκινοί* would suggest that the image is not wholly out of his mind. If *νήπιος* is a state of ignorance and existence in the flesh, they are still prone to it and indeed have never really left it since they quarrel and indulge in their own wisdom. It seems better to take *σαρκινοί* as heightening *σαρκινοί*, although J. Weiss favours *σαρκινοί*¹ as a heavy criticism with *σαρκινοί* as a lessening of the censure. But Paul's criticism of his readers is not that they were fleshly before they received Christ, so were all his converts, but that they still persist in the flesh, v.3 ἄλλ' οὐδὲ (ἔτι) νῦν is strong in its criticism.

2) The recurrence in 14.20 of the child image in the context of exhortation is also worthy of note if one is correct in linking the letter as a whole to the factions outlined, although it is also related to 13.11 and the warning there against over-stressing spiritual gifts.

Also, we may detect behind this account of Paul's preaching a defence of its validity. If 4.3 echoes some kind of criticism of Paul on the part of his "enthusiastic" opponents, perhaps 2.1ff and 3.1 also echo some criticism, namely that Paul was not up to much as an orator and that what he gave was pretty weak stuff, γὰρ ὁ οὐ βροῦμα. Paul for his part defends himself, in that if it seemed so then the reason lay not with himself but his readers - his weakness was only to show the Spirit's power the more (2.5)

1 Erster Korintherbrief. Meyer's Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 10te Aufl. Göttingen 1925, p.71. Contrast J.B. Lightfoot Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul London 1895, p.185 "σαρκινοί ... implies more of a rebuke, though the less strong word in itself."

and that it seemed weak to them was evidence of their unspiritual condition (3.1, 3).

Returning then to our original question, a common interpretation of 3.1ff is that which argues that Paul is criticising the Corinthians not for being νήπιοι but for remaining so and for not progressing to a higher stage, to maturity. In this sense, all Christians apparently are νήπιοι at the beginning of their Christian life; they are babes with the aim of growing to maturity, and at 3.1 the νήπιοι is contrasted with τέλειοι 2.6. The perspective on tradition would then be one of growth from infancy to manhood, Paul's criticism being that they had ceased to progress. This idea is one which is certainly close to Stoic thought, e.g. Epictetus Discourses Book 2, 23.40 ἐπεὶ διὰ λόγου καὶ τοιαύτης παραδόσεως ἔλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον δεῖ ; and also Book 2, 16.39 οὐ θέλεις ἤδη ὡς τὰ παιδία ἀπογαλακτισθῆναι καὶ ἄπτεσθαι τροφῆς στερεωτέρας , where one notes also the idea of growing up and partaking of solid food (cf. Hebrews 5.14). In this latter respect the words from Philo De Agric. 9 are often cited ἐπεὶ δὲ νηπίοις μὲν ἔστι γάλα τροφή. τελείοις δὲ τὰ ἐκ πυρῶν πέμματα, and Pythagoras is said to have divided his pupils into νήπιοι - τέλειοι. To this view that one advances from immaturity to maturity in learning, one may easily link the idea of stages of growth as represented in milk and solid food, so that grades of instruction correspond to stages of growth and advancement. All this seems to fit

1 For further examples see Weiss Erster Korintherbrief p.xviiiiff, and p.72ff; T.D.N.T. 1 p.646 " γάλα" (Schlier); cf. J. Dupont Gnosis pp.151-2; W.L. Knox St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles Cambridge 1939, p.111.

well with what we find in 3.1 - Paul chides his readers for not being advanced enough to move on to maturity and to receive higher instruction reserved for the τέλειοι 2.6. He himself is their teacher, their father in the gospel 4.15 (cf. Rom. 2.10 teacher of νήπιοι.), but his pupils have become stunted in their growth.

This view, however, is open to some objection and we may list the following points: it is hoped to show that νήπιος is not so much an early stage of growth to be left behind as one progresses to deeper things, but a position of immaturity incompatible with that spiritual understanding which as Christians they ought to have.

a) A serious objection is that noted by J. Weiss¹ that the contrast with νήπιος at 3.1 is not τέλειος but πνευματικοί. Wilckens² who finds in Paul here a double standard, that τὰ πνευματικά can only be understood by the mature Christian, agrees that the correlate to τέλειος is πνευματικός 2.6 (cf. 3.1). However, the widespread contrast of τέλειος and νήπιος is briefly made behind the primary antithesis of πνευματικός / σαρκικός. We should recall, however, that at 2.6ff Paul is dealing not with the "intra church" trouble at Corinth as yet, but prefaces his argument with the contrast between the gospel and the world, so that τέλειοι refers to Christians. Thus Weiss remarks "τέλειοι sind alle Christen, in denen der Geist lebt".³ Also, the correlate at 3.1 to νήπιοι is not σαρκικός but σαρκινός.

1 Erster Korintherbrief p.74.

2 Weisheit und Torheit pp.52-3.

3 Erster Korintherbrief p.xix; cf. du Plessis Teleios p.184 "In this connection 'teleios' is a general term for Christians as such". Spiritual here refers not to special gifts of the Spirit which comes up at Chap. 12, but to the general gift of the Spirit to all Christians who are baptised.

Paul, having established his point about the contrast between God's wisdom and the world's (wisdom here is not for a special group within the community), returns to his rehearsing of his first preaching of the gospel, 2.1ff (cf. 3.1ff). His lament is that the gospel has not had the impact on them that it should have had, of making them spiritually minded. Although the child image $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$ at 3.1 seems to come in as an extra alongside the main contrast of fleshly and spiritual existence, it also seems to mean to be fleshly and to walk $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \delta\iota\upsilon\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\nu$, in the sense of being devoid of understanding (cf. Rom. 2.20 noting the parallel between $\delta\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omega\nu$ and $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\nu$). One might compare here 14.20 where the image of the child and maturity are brought close together; there it is not, however, a question of development from one to another but of contrast, i.e. the true Christian is one who is not in a state of childish thinking. Perhaps, also, we may detect on Paul's part a double censure in asking his readers to be spiritual who, we may suspect, prided themselves on being just that, and that if they must be "childish" then at least they should be in their attitude to false ways.

We may leave open the question of whether the Matthean logion 11.25ff was known to the Corinthians and had been taken up by them.¹ On the whole one is not inclined to connect the two despite the similarities, especially in view of Paul's quite different use of the child theme, which seems much more in accord with the Ancient World's estimate of the child with its low intelligence.²

1 See for example J.M. Robinson Trajectories p.40; M. Suggs Wisdom, Christology and Law pp.86-9; C. Morrison "Baptism and Maturity" in Interpretation 17 (1963), 387-401.

2 See above p.60ff.

b) The idea that Paul is criticising them only on the ground of their lack of progression is difficult in view of 1.4 and the fact that it is only in certain matters that the readers are *νήπιοι* ; otherwise they are rich in every way (1.5 cf. 4.8, 11.2). In these matters, therefore, through the contrast between childishness and maturity, Paul asks the Corinthians likewise to live as they ought, to realise afresh the spiritual life they have received through the gospel and apply it more properly to their conduct and thinking. We may recall here how in Stoic thought the mature man is he who is orientated toward the goal of wisdom, and that maturity is the mark of those devoted to that end - such a man, says Epictetus, must give himself wholly to the call of philosophy and not act immaturely as a child which is fickle in its pursuits (Encheiridion 29.7 cf. 51.1-2¹). For Paul, the Corinthians who have received the Spirit should allow the Spirit to reign and so live mature Christian lives.

c) The other uses of *νήπιος* in Paul may help to elucidate this interpretation that *νήπιος* implies not an initial stage of development but a contrast with mature spiritual conduct which ought to characterise the Christian.

1 Cor. 14.20 has already been seen to imply a contrast, and so also does 13.11² where Paul contrasts "now" and "then" in terms of childhood and maturity. The point is not the gradual growth from one to the other but of contrast; one notes *καταργηθήσεται* , and also v.9-10 which is not the gradual filling out of the partial to the complete, but the contrast between the two.

¹ See above p.63.

² See du Plessis Teleios p.185ff.

Gal. 4.2ff also provides a contrast and is relevant, even though Paul is here drawing on legal thought to make his point.¹

here implies a state of bondage to the _____ and is applicable to Jew and Greek. The opposite is sonship and freedom through the gift of the Spirit. In the gospel one possesses maturity; without it one exists in a state of bondage; in Christ one is no longer in a state of νηπιότης (cf. Col. 2.20 where the new life in Christ is death to the old bondage to the στοιχεῖα ²). So also in 1 Cor. 2.6ff there is a radical contrast between the wisdom of God and the rulers of this age, for whom it is but folly; as νήπιοι the readers are under the sway of the latter still and for them God's wisdom is still foolishness. In both Gal. 4.3 and 1 Cor. 2.6ff the ἡμεῖς refers not to a special group but to Christians generally so that with the Spirit comes maturity, the opposite of being νήπιος. Rom. 2.20, as we have seen, equates νήπιοι and ἄφρονες and being blind and in darkness. Here Paul describes the role of a Jewish teacher and in view of 1 Cor. 3.1 perhaps he saw himself in this role also.³ In regard to what has been said about νήπιος in Paul, one untutored and marked by immaturity, it would seem difficult to read νήπιοι at 1 Thess. 2.7 - given this understanding of νήπιος, he could scarcely have become such; rather ἥπιος fits better in the context of Paul's not claiming apostolic rights.

From the above survey one concludes that νήπιος is a description of those who lack that mature understanding of the faith

1 v.3 οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς breaks through the image to its application.

2 The στοιχεῖα are better taken as spiritual powers rather than "ABC" and rudimentary knowledge, contrast Hebrews 5.12.

3 See T.D.N.T. IV "νήπιος" p.919 (Bertram).

which as Christians they ought to have. Thus νήπιοι ἐν Χριστῷ at 3.1 are "immature Christians" not in the sense of "beginners in the faith" whom Paul is chiding for not progressing, but rather he criticises them for not allowing the Spirit which they have received full sway, and for persisting in an attitude which they should have left behind with their old lives.

This conclusion differs, therefore, from that of W. Grundmann;¹ Grundmann follows the distinction made in diet between the initial kerygma of the Cross and a more advanced wisdom, noting that Paul qualifies his condemnation of the readers as σαρκικοί with ὅς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ "d.h. er spricht ihnen das Christsein nicht ab, tadelt sie aber wegen des Fehlens des pneumatischen Wachstum". The νήπιοι correspond for Grundmann to the βρέφη of 1 Peter 2.2 but are regarded by Paul as having become stuck. This, however, is not to take sufficient account of the distinction between σαρκινοί and σαρκικοί, and of the fact that the contrast between flesh and spirit is uppermost in Paul's mind, rather than continuity between child and maturity.

So also C. Morrison² argues for a link between 1 Cor. 3.1ff and Matthew's and Jesus' teaching on the child generally, on the basis that while for Jesus childhood and repentance are closely connected (Matt. 18.3), from the point of view of the church, having been baptised and become as little children with repentance now behind one and the life of the Spirit dominant, one must grow and mature. This, however, would seem to cloud the differences

1 "Die ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in der Paränese" p.191.

2 "Baptism and Maturity"; see above p. 111 note 1.

in the use of the child image in the interests of a harmonizing view, and to confuse baptismal regeneration with begetting through teaching.

Here the following points require some clarification:

1) 3.1 ἐν Χριστῷ - The difficulty that Paul faces is that while all Christians are recipients of the Spirit (2.12), yet he could not address the Corinthians as spiritual. The question arises therefore of how we are to understand the readers' νηπίότης as being ἐν Χριστῷ, in view of their share in the gospel and all the blessings which it has undoubtedly brought them. Perhaps one could translate "νήπιοι although in Christ", "immature despite their fellowship in Christ", but this is difficult in view of the fact that they have been obviously blessed in Christ. Moreover, Paul, for all their immaturity, does not deny their Christian status but on the contrary fully expects them to realise what he is saying and the importance of it for their existence as Christians.

If the image of the teacher in Rom. 2.20 as διδάσκαλος νηπίων is at all relevant, we may recall that Paul is still looking back to the occasion of the first preaching of the gospel to them, and is also perhaps countering a charge of weakness on his own part (cf. 1.30). At that time they were but men of the world, so to speak, (cf. σαρκινοίς which is neutral in tone), whom in the nature of the case he could not call spiritual. Happily they believed his preaching and accepted the gospel. Now he asks them

to realise what had been imparted, to be mature in their comprehension of it (σαρκικός implies criticism), to start living in effect as mature men turned towards God's goal or τέλος in Christ.

We may therefore with J. Weiss¹ take ἐν Χριστῷ not in its deep mystical sense, but in a more neutral or loose fashion. Thus the phrase can in places become simply "Christian" (cf. Rom. 16.8, 10, 13; 1 Cor. 4.10), or something like "from the Christian point of view" (cf. Col. 3.18, 20; at 1 Cor. 7.38 ἐν Κυρίῳ is virtually "in the church"). Accordingly we may translate 3.1 as "immature Christianly speaking". As we have sought to understand it, Paul is summoning the readers to spiritual maturity in the sense not of progressing from an initial simple level to a deeper knowledge, but of allowing the Spirit which they had received to work within them. If in fact maturity for Paul here is the mark not of those who have achieved some deep esoteric knowledge, but of those who in the Spirit's strength are orientated towards the goal or τέλος of Christ, then what is at stake is not a failure of progression but a failure of comprehension (ἀλλ' οὐδὲ [ἔτι] νῦν δύνασθε) - maturity is possible for every Christian who has received the Spirit, and Paul is urging the Corinthians to grow up in the sense of realising what they have received.

1 Erster Korintherbrief p.72 note 1: "Paulinische Probleme II" T.S.K. 69 (1896) 7-33, esp. pp.14-15.

2) The τέλειοι at 2.6 are best taken as referring to Christians generally who allow the Spirit to work fully who are πνευματικοί.¹ The context at 2.6 seems to deal not with stages within the faith but with the faith as a whole over against the non-Christian world,² and by a style of argument that only by God can God be known,³ argues the complete separation between God's wisdom and that of the world. Thus by "we" in the passage ("we" is contrasted with the rulers and ψυχικοί v.8, 14) one ought to understand Christians generally. Throughout the section 2.6-16, Paul's language may reflect that of his opponents, i.e. beyond the use of Stoic categories that the τέλειος is he who forges ahead in the pursuit of wisdom (for the Christian he who truly allows the Spirit to work and to point him to God's τέλος), there may also be a hint that the enthusiasts themselves were claiming to be τέλειοι. If this is so, Paul for his part wrests it from them to apply it instead to the true Christian. He contrasts true Christian "gnosis" with their own "gnosis" and suggests that to be ἐν πνεύματι is truly to know God (2.10,12).

1 See J.N. Sevenster Paul and Seneca Leiden 1961, p.144ff.

2 Du Plessis Teleios p.180.

3 B. Gaertner "Pauline and Johannine 'to know God'" N.T.S. 14 (1967-8), 209-231.

3) One should be careful to distinguish between baptismal regeneration, begetting through instruction 4.15, and the image of the child νήπιος 3.1 as an image of understanding. The first need not concern us here: Paul does not make use of this terminology but prefers the more orthodox rabbinic description of recreation, and in view of 1.14ff is not concerned with baptism as such as the correct understanding of his gospel reflected in the true baptismal life of the Christian. In view of 1.17 the description of the readers as νήπιον at 3.1 has to do not with being born again at baptism, but with understanding the gospel as Paul proclaimed it. So also one should be careful to distinguish between 3.1-2 and 4.15 - ὡς νηπίοις -- γάλα ὑμῶν ἐπότιον and διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου--ὑμῶν ἐγέννησαν (cf. 1 Thess. 2.7). Certainly in both it is very much a matter of Paul's authority; 3.1 ἐπότιον implies Paul as a nurse. But one is hesitant to say, therefore, that Paul "begets" his readers so that they then become babes in Christ whom he feeds. Thus, we should note that a) in the image of begetting through instruction and of imitating at 4.15 it is τέχνη that is used; b) the image of the child and nurse at 3.1 and that of the child and father who begets at 4.15 are parallel, the one perhaps dealing with an attack on his authority and the other with his right to assert it. This being so, one cannot

argue that Paul begets his readers through the gospel, feeds them milk, which is the word of the Cross, and that now they must mature to more advanced things - on the contrary, by being Paul's true children, τέκνα, in the gospel they cease to be νήπιοι.¹

There is no hint at all that the readers ever cease to be his children or that he ever relinquishes his special care for them as father. At 4.8 Paul is not so much declaring that they do not need him any more (indeed he seems to be poking fun at their endeavours on their own) as expressing a wish that they would come to share, along with him, true understanding of the gospel. In any case it is not until 4.14 that the image of father/begetting appears so that we may not combine it with nurse/milk at 3.1. At Qumran 1QH.7.20-1 we do find a combination of such images in which the Teacher regards himself as father and nurse, and the community as his children in the imparting of knowledge to them - "And I sought support in Thy truth and I ----- And Thou hast made me a father unto sons of kindness And a nursing father to men of wonder and they have Opened (their) mouths as sucklings of the breasts of his mother/ /And/ as the play of a child in the bosom of His nursing fathers."²

The background no doubt is found in, e.g., Ps. 131, the widespread use of milk as an image of special instruction and education,³ and the idea found in normative Judaism of a teacher as father who begets through his instruction, e.g. b.Sanh.19b, cf

1 So at 4.17 Timothy, as Paul's true child, τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν καὶ πιστόν is sent to remind his other children, τέκνα ἀγαπητά

2 M. Mansoor The Thanksgiving Hymns Leiden 1961.

3 See below on 1 Peter 2.2.

99b "he who teaches the son of his neighbour the Torah, Scripture ascribes it to him as if he had begotten him" regarded as a fulfilment of the command "to be fruitful and multiply".¹

We may briefly note another complex of ideas which is drawn into the theme of begetting through instruction, that of building² - thus one finds a play on בְּנֵי as "beget" and "build" and on בְּנֵי as "sons" and "builders", cf. Ruth 4.11, 1 Sam. 2.35, Jer. 12.16, Gen. 1.28.³ So at Qumran the "children" of 1QH. 7.20-1 are also a "tested wall" 1QS. 8.5ff. So also Paul as their teacher and father likens himself to an architect and his readers to a building built on the foundation of Christ - this for Paul is Christ Crucified 3.10 $\epsilon\theta\eta\kappa\alpha$ (cf. 2.2 $\epsilon\kappa\rho\iota\nu\alpha$).

If the above is allowed to stand, then the image of the babes offers a perspective on tradition which is not that of gradual growth therein from infancy to maturity but that on the contrary to be truly in the tradition is to be mature in so far as it is life $\epsilon\nu\ \pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota$; it is the cessation of being in the state of $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$ which is descriptive of life outwith the Spirit, a life devoid of understanding of what the gospel means.⁴ This, therefore,

1 Jeb. 6.6 See T.D.N.T. "γεννῶ" I p.665ff (Büchsel). See above pp.89-90.

2 See below on Paul and 1 Peter.

3 See J. Massingberg Ford "Thou art 'Abraham' and upon this Rock ----" H.J. 6 (1965), 289-301, esp. p.296ff; J.D.M. Derret "The Stone the Builders Rejected" T. u. U. 102, Stud. Evang. 4, 180-186, esp. p.184; T.D.N.T. IV "Ἰερεμίας" (Jeremias), p.270; M. Black Aramaic Approach pp.11-12, 107; See also H.M. Orlinsky "Qumran and the present state of O.T. text studies - the LXX text" J.B.L. 78 (1959), 26-33.

4 So H. Preisker Das Ethos des Urchristentums Gutersloh 1949, p.132 "Νῆπιοι, σαρκικοί, παιδεία (1 Kor. 3.1ff, 14.10) entsprechen einander. ---- Wie Unmündige, wie Kinder kommen dem Apostel die Korinther vor, die ungetauft und darum ohne $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ sind." - contrast Grundmann "Die NHIOI in der Paränese" p.191 "d.h. er spricht ihnen das Christsein nicht ab ----".

makes Paul's criticism of the Corinthians' wisdom really quite devastating.

We may now at this point turn to the other two questions related to the manner in which Paul's censure of the *νήπιοι* operates, namely whether there exists indeed a double standard for babes and for mature, and then how Paul's authority is to be understood in relation to the child image.

1) When we looked at Matthew, we saw that 19.21 did not imply a double standard of discipleship but is rather the radical demand of Jesus in face of the Kingdom. A similar problem confronts us here, save that what is involved here is a double standard of teaching and insight rather than of discipleship. Many scholars have located such a standard around a) the contrast between *νήπιοι* and *τέλειοι* and b) around the corresponding contrast between milk and solid food. We have already found reason to contest the interpretation involved in a), arguing that *τέλειοι* refers not to a more advanced stage in the faith but to the true Christian state *ἐν πνεύματι*.

So far as the second contrast is concerned, b), we have indeed already noted in Stoicism a distinction in which milk represents the elementary teachings and solid food the Stoic virtues for the mature.¹ (The attempt of Reitzenstein² to derive "milk" here from the practice of the Mysteries does not seem very appropriate if only because of the contrast between milk and solid food; the

1 See Weiss Erster Korintherbrief p.72; Sevenster Paul and Seneca p.144ff.

2 Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen Leipzig 1927, p.329.

evidence of 1 Peter 2.2 on the other hand seems better founded for such an interpretation). When, however, this is applied to Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians in support of a double standard, it becomes somewhat difficult: a) it would seem strange that Paul, in trying to demolish factions within the church, should himself set up distinctions within the faith;¹ b) 2.6ff is not the higher teaching for the mature but the contrast between God's way and the world's - it is not until 3.1ff that Paul returns to grips directly with the intra-church situation, having outlined as a basis the contrast between Christianity and the world; c) Paul as an apostle knows of no other teaching than Christ Crucified (2.2), there is no higher wisdom than this and this is the gospel by which he begat them.² Nor does one find convincing arguments which say that Paul, of course, does not give the higher wisdom because his readers were obviously still only *νήπιοι* .

So also W.L. Knox attempts³ to distinguish between milk and solid food. In original fashion he argues that Paul's experience at Athens led him to change his gospel in the sense of adapting it better to the subtleties of Greek argument. On his first visit to Corinth what he gave had been milk, an elementary version - the solid food was a better adapted gospel. Although a full critique of this position would take one too far afield, one does not find it convincing as a solution here, and it is difficult to

1 Du Plessis Teleios p.180.

2 Contra Grundmann "Die ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in der Παράνεση" p.191, who locates the difference between milk and solid food in the Cross as basic teaching and 2.6ff as the higher wisdom for the mature.

3 St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles p.111ff.

link with the censure in the contrast between *νήπιόι* and *πνευματικοί*. Knox takes it that when the Corinthians began to pride themselves on their gifts, Paul reminds them that what he preached was only then very elementary. Another argument put forward for a distinction between milk and solid food is one based on Paul's own skill as a teacher; thus, e.g. A. Robertson remarks¹ that "the wise teacher proves himself to be such by his ability to impart --- what is simple and yet gives insight into the full instruction that is to follow."

However, rather than locate the contrast in diet either in the content of Paul's teaching or in his own self for that matter, one prefers to seek the answer primarily in the Corinthians themselves.² If, as seems likely, Paul is countering an attack on himself and his gospel, e.g. 1.17, 2.4, that he was a poor orator and that his teaching was not up to much, then 3.1 may be linked to 2.1ff as part of his defence. So also 2.16b *ἡμεῖς* has a note of authority about it as if Paul is making a strong counter to something his opponents were claiming for themselves; and since Paul's gospel and his authority as an apostle to proclaim it are closely connected, the *ἡμεῖς* would refer both to himself and to those who, in obedience, follow or ought to follow him.

If his gospel seemed weak, then the fault lay with the Corinthians themselves, who in reality were quite immature with all their worldly wisdom - it was obvious that they had not grasped the meaning of the gospel which in their eyes, as in the world's

1 First Epistle to the Corinthians A. Robertson and A. Plummer I.C.C. Edinburgh 1911, pp.52-3.

2 See Schnackenburg 'Christian Adulthood according to Paul' p.357ff.

eyes, was simply foolishness. Paul could not, as he might have wished, speak to them on equal terms as it were, and it was more perhaps his manner of teaching and speaking which he had had to watch, but not so as to reflect a different content of teaching.

That there is no distinction as such between milk and solid food in the content of Paul's teaching fits better the nature of his gospel (2.1) that all he knows is Christ Crucified, and the image of the nurse 3.2 ἐκότησα which appears briefly suggests that there is some criticism of his authority. So also would this fit with the foundation (3.10) that he has laid, i.e. in the image of the building it is not that special teaching follows on elementary; the distinction between the apostles and the various materials is not in this, but in the consistency between them and the θεμέλιον. It is not without significance that at 3.18 as at 2.6 Paul again adds a section on wisdom, only here it is a condemnation of worldly wisdom of which the Corinthians have far too much. Paul, as an apostle, could preach only one gospel and could lay only one foundation, which in fact was already laid (3.11) - in both cases Christ, and more particularly Christ Crucified.

Paul here is presumably not describing the process of building since the readers are already described as an οἰκοδομή but rather, in the context of the Corinthians' misunderstanding of the gospel preached, is referring to the kinds of teaching consistent with his proclamation of Christ. E. Best argues¹ that the

1 One Body in Christ London 1955, p.161ff. Contrast P. Vielhauer Oikodome - Das Bild vom Bau Karlsruhe-Durlach 1940, 85ff, who agrees that it is a matter of continuity in teaching, "die Weiterbildung des Kerygmas in Lehren". θεμέλιον θεῖναι refers to Paul's preaching, ἐποικοδομεῖν to subsequent teaching of. Rom. 15.20 where Paul's preaching is equivalent to laying a foundation.

foundation laid cannot be teaching about Christ but Christ himself, and that it is not consistent to talk of the building work as teaching but the actual building as the church. Yet, since Paul is wrestling not with those who had forgotten what he had given to them but with those who had misunderstood it, the foundation is undoubtedly Christ himself but this cannot be separated from Paul's understanding and teaching of him as the Crucified One. So it is surely no accident that Paul uses "building up" of the worship and the life of the community with reference to love, i.e. the true understanding of the gospel and true participation in it means sharing in the New Age, brought about in the death of Christ, God's wisdom (cf. 2 Cor. 5.14ff.)¹ For Paul the readers are God's temple and hence worship must edify all, but the norm is Christ with the understanding of him as the Crucified One.

Also, as we have noted, here Paul's gospel and his authority as an apostle are closely bound up together: not only did the Corinthians misunderstand his gospel but, as a result, his apostleship as well; and so it is through imitating him that they cease from their baby state and realise the maturity of the Spirit which is theirs already. Paul seems to be faced with a misunderstanding of his apostleship on a double account - from the side of those who disparaged it along with his gospel 2.1ff (cf. 4.3), and from the side of those who exalted it 1.12.² It is interesting that he rejects those who would support him at the cost of church unity, i.e. as apostle he is always subject to the Lord and to the purpose

1 See G. Bornkamm "On the Understanding of Worship" pp.164-5.

2 We need not here go into the problem of the "Christ party" or whether it is in fact a gloss.

of edification of the church. Paul thus puts his apostleship in perspective, 3.9 (cf. 1.12, 4.1).

- 2) Paul's authority and the $\nu\eta\kappa\iota\omicron\iota$ - following on from the above remarks we may here consider the second related question outlined, that of Paul's authority, and consider it under two headings, a) the concept of imitation and b) the traditions that Paul quotes.

If the above arguments are sound, then Paul's contention with his readers is not over a failure to move on to a more esoteric teaching which he might have given them, but a failure to adopt a mature understanding of the gospel as befits those who have believed it and received the Spirit (cf. Gal.5.25). What he had handed on to them and what they had made of it were in clear contradiction, and the continuity in the process of handing on the gospel, in which it is received and becomes operative in the life of the recipients, had here broken down. Paul, for his part, resolutely maintains his gospel of the Cross as God's wisdom and bases his own apostleship upon it and his exhortations to understand it aright.

- a) Imitation: At 4.16 Paul urges the Corinthians to imitate him, following upon a reminder that he is their spiritual father in the gospel, and with a $\kappa\alpha\pi\alpha\chi\alpha\lambda\omega$ which recalls 1.10.¹ To follow Paul² is to come to a true understanding of the gospel he has given them, and to put an end to strife which is the consequence of their worldly wisdom. This call for imitation belongs very much to his

1 See Dahl "Paul and the Church at Corinth" p.319.

2 D. Stanley "'Become Imitators of Me' - the Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition" Biblica 40 (1957), 859-877. "In short Paul as $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\varsigma$ is the representative of apostolic and evangelical tradition. ----- $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\varsigma$ is his personal kerygma as preached and lived by him".

relationship to his readers as their father¹ who has begotten them (4.14), and the personal responsibility he feels for them (cf. 1 Thess. 2.11, Gal. 4.19 where his "birth pangs" are similar to 1 Cor. 4.15, as a struggling all over again for them to realise the gospel message, Philem. 10). So also it may underlie 3.1, if it is not dictated by the image itself, since his authority as an apostle was under attack, although, as we have seen, his begetting them through the gospel does not correspond to his feeding them an initial milk diet from which later they would be weaned. In view of this, it is noteworthy that Paul's theme of imitation occurs in those letters which Paul himself had founded; it is absent from Romans, Ephes. 4.32ff speaks rather of the imitation of God, and Gal. 4.12 is uncertain since he adds ὅτι καὶ ὡς ὑμεῖς although he had founded the church there.

The idea of imitation seems to be fairly widespread in the Ancient World, and is frequent in Rabbinic circles as a theme of instruction between teacher and pupil. The idea of the imitation of God seems to be more common in Hellenism and in Philo, and if it occurs in Rabbinic thought is connected with obedience to the Torah (cf. Matt. 5.48). Thus Gerhardsson remarks² "the pupil had to absorb all the traditional wisdom with 'eyes, ears and every member' by seeking the company of a Rabbi, by serving him (שׂוֹמֵר) following him and imitating him and not only listening to him". So Paul seems to confine imitation mainly to himself, apart from

1 See above pp. 119-120 and the reference to b.Sanh.19b, cf. 99b.

2 B. Gerhardsson Memory and Manuscript Uppsala 1961, pp.182-3; cf. Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity Lund 1964.

Ephes. 4.32.¹

For the Corinthians, therefore, imitating Paul becomes the way of appropriating the power of the Cross, of understanding God's wisdom and putting an end to their own worldliness; and thus allowing this gospel to be reflected in their lives so they put an end to their present childish state and find maturity in the Spirit. Paul strengthens this by declaring the link between his gospel and his apostleship, at which they scoffed, and its contrast with his readers' view of themselves, 4.8ff. Paul as an apostle exhibits a weakness and humility which are not to be scoffed at but on the contrary truly express the gospel and allow God's power to be at work (cf. 15.10).

What Paul means by "imitation" has been a matter of dispute, whether obedience to his authority simply or himself as a personal example. The former is argued strongly by W. Michaelis,² the latter by D. Stanley³ and W. de Boer.⁴ Perhaps we need not decide between the two, especially as Paul seems to leave the matter open, e.g. 4.17 where personal example and instruction are combined.⁵ In view of the rabbinic background it seems difficult to exclude

1 On 1 Thess. 1.6 cf. below.

2 "μιμῆσθαι" T.D.N.T. IV, pp.659-674.

3 "'Become Imitators'" p.859ff.

4 The Imitation of Paul: an exegetical study Kampen 1962.

5 What exactly the ὁδοὺς are is difficult to know - that they are taught seems to militate against Paul as an example, but in view of his close link between gospel and apostleship it seems difficult to exclude it entirely. One suspects the force of the argument to be that Paul reminds them of their place in the wider church. See de Boer The Imitation of Paul p.147ff; H.D. Betz Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament Tübingen 1967, p.155ff.

any kind of example, but perhaps de Boer also goes too far in saying "Paul shows himself to have been a keen observer of human nature in calling his readers to imitate as beloved children, for there is no atmosphere in which the child's imitation so flourishes as that of abundant parental love".¹ Nor does de Boer's "never is there more freedom from guile, more openness and naturalness than in the acts of children"² do justice to the distinction between *νήπιοι* 3.1 and *τέκνα* 4.14.

Paul, in connecting a description of himself as apostle with the gospel he has given - a description which contrasts strongly with the Corinthians' self-importance - would seem to put himself forward as an example. He is, however, an example in the context of the gospel he proclaims - as God's wisdom is revealed in the foolishness of the Cross, so God's power is effective in his weakness, so will it be for them in obedience to his gospel and in following his example. Thus imitation stands not for a means of progressing from an initial stage to a more mature one, but for a means of recovering a truly Christian state so as to realise with Paul what the gospel means.³

This idea of shared experience, that obedience to Paul which brings the realisation for themselves of what the gospel means, imitation which is really participation, may also lie behind 11.1.

1 The Imitation of Paul p.78

2 The Imitation of Paul p.78

3 E. Guttegemanns Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr Göttingen 1966, notes the close connection "Die Christen sind denn *μιμηταί* des Apostels, wenn sie durch die apostolische Verkündigung das Sein *ἐν Χριστῷ* appliziert bekommen und ihrerseits den *λόγος* annehmen (1 Thess. 1.6)," p.193, cf. p.190ff.

Here Paul adds to the imitation of himself καθὼς καὶ Χριστοῦ which recalls the similar καὶ τοῦ κυρίου of 1 Thess. 1.6. This latter passage of 1 Thess. 1.6 is perhaps best understood as indicating that in enduring hardship bravely they discovered for themselves the power of the gospel and shared a common experience. This authenticated Paul's authority as well so that his word was seen to be a word of power in which God was at work.¹ This seems preferable to taking it as a self correction lest Paul be thought to be boasting² or that they simply modelled themselves on Paul or Jesus or the Judaeen church,³ 2.14. So also it would seem that 1 Cor. 11.1 is similar to this - certainly the καθὼς καὶ Χριστοῦ again is no afterthought on Paul's part but serves to bring the readers into the gospel's meaning and to bear out his authority as apostle which derives its character also from the gospel.

Again, this passage says not simply that Paul is an example of moral excellence, but that the true Christian life demands self-control. No doubt the readers would, in their enthusiasm, agree that πάντα ἔφεσσι but the gospel of the Cross requires care for others v.24 οἰκοδομεῖ (cf. 3.10ff). Just as there is continuity between Paul's understanding of his gospel and his office v.32-33, so also there should be such conduct on their part as a sign that they, too, have understood what they have received. Perhaps there is some truth in I. Abrahams' statement that Paul "was making allowance for the fact that to imitate a concrete

1 See H.D. Betz Nachfolge p.143ff; Stanley "'Become Imitators'" p.868.

2 Michaelis " μιμεῖσθαι " T.D.N.T. IV p.672.

3 De Boer The Imitation of Paul p.92ff, p.107.

imitator was easier to follow than in the track of an idea"¹ but Paul here is not putting himself in between the readers and the historical Jesus so to speak; behind Paul's gospel of Christ Crucified there lies the whole concept of Jesus as the lowly Righteous One whom God has exalted,² a theme we have already encountered in Matthew.

Thus for Paul (cf. Phil. 2.5ff) the obedient self-giving of Jesus which lies behind the Cross becomes the normative pattern of the Christian life as based upon the gospel of the Cross. Here, however, discipleship is a matter not simply of obedience to Christ as a moral example but involves a whole theological perspective on Paul's part, depicting God's way with the world. Thus the Cross is God's wisdom which the world cannot understand, and recent discussion on Phil. 2.5ff has shown³ the cosmic dimension of the hymn, i.e. that the humiliation-exaltation of Christ is not simply a moral example but the sign of the inbreaking of the New Age and participation in it. Thus the theme of imitation means for the readers a recall to the foundation of the gospel of Christ Crucified on which they are established as God's building (2.9 θεοῦ), and to participation in the New Age. Here it would seem that the νῆπιότ of 1 Cor. 3.1 are quite the opposite of Matt. 11.25 for here participation in the New Age and the knowledge of God's wisdom are incompatible with a state of νῆπιότης. One may therefore differ from the conclusion of

1 Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels 2nd Series p.141

2 W.D. Davies Paul and Rabbinic Judaism London 1965, p.265ff;
H. Anderson Jesus and Christian Origins Oxford 1964, p.267ff;
Guttesgemanns Der leidende Apostel p.194.

3 See G. Bornkamm "On Understanding the Christ Hymn" in Early Christian Experience London 1969, pp.112-122.

de Boer that "the aim of the nurturing process by Paul was to bring his children to a living and personal imitating of Christ in their own right"¹ i.e. that they must progress from immaturity to maturity, grow up to be like their father so to speak, and learn "mature imitation of Christ".² In this Paul acts as a stepping stone. If, however, *νήπιοι* and *τέχνα* are not to be combined as we have seen, the imitation and being in a state of *νηπιότης* exist more in contrast, and imitation reflects a true understanding of the gospel as Paul declared it. Moreover, it is not so much to bring them to imitate Christ in their own right as to share with Paul the full meaning of the gospel. In this, nevertheless, there is no hint of Paul relinquishing his special concern for his readers as a church he himself has founded. He hints at such independence (4.8) somewhat critically, and it would seem that the *τέχνα* - *πάτηρ* relationship endures.

b) Paul's use of tradition: In this we come again on rather a large subject in itself³ and one can deal with it only as it bears upon the child image and our understanding of Paul's gospel as tradition. Just as his call for imitation serves to secure the Corinthians in a right understanding of the gospel they have received, so also Paul's citing of traditions of various kinds

1 The Imitation of Paul p.166

2 The Imitation of Paul p.166 cf. p.169

3 Apart from the ecumenical debate surveyed in the introduction, see K. Wengst "Der Apostel und die Tradition" Z.T.K. 2 (1972), 145-62; L. Goppelt "Tradition nach Paulus" E.u.D. iv (1958), 214-33; G. Eicholz "Verkündigung und Tradition" Ev.Theol. 24 (1964), 565-86; L. Cerfaux "La Tradition selon St. Paul" Recueil L. Cerfaux II Gembloux 1954, pp.253-82.

serves to combat false understanding of the gospel. In both, his status as an apostle, as one called to proclaim the gospel, is decisive (9.1ff).

This relation between his gospel and the traditions he cites is a delicate one. Thus, at 15.1ff there is a close connection between the language of faith and proclamation on the one hand and that of transmitting and receiving on the other.¹ If we have been correct in linking the trouble at Corinth as a whole to their misunderstanding of the gospel and the place of the apostle in preaching it (3.21 cf. 1.11, 3.3), playing down God's wisdom, i.e. the Cross in favour of their own, then this too may lie behind 15.1ff (cf. 3.1). With many scholars we may accept the idea that Paul is here not countering a denial of the Resurrection but a claim that the Resurrection has already occurred and that the Corinthians are already living in the New Age.² Consequently, in citing the tradition at 15.3ff Paul is not reminding them of what they had forgotten but, in the light of the misinterpretation of his gospel, is dealing with a misinterpretation of the tradition as well. Such an "over enthusiasm" stems from a failure to understand God's wisdom and follows from their own sophistry (cf. 2 John v.9 where any advance is really a departure).

As at 3.1 we may detect again a hint of Paul's defence of himself as an apostle and the direct connection between his apostleship and his gospel. At 15.9ff he seeks to show God's sufficiency is paramount and his own natural abilities of no consequence.

1 Goppelt "Tradition nach Paulus" p.216

2 J. Schütz "Apostolic Authority and the control of Tradition" N.T.S. 15 (1968-9), 439-57.

There would seem to be here more than purely historical reflection on his own part, i.e. not only is he the last in order of succession but somehow his being least redounds to God's grace, in contrast to the Corinthians' pride. In this, therefore, Paul is not simply a Rabbi despite his use of tradition language - perhaps in this Gerhardsson goes too far.¹ Paul does not derive his gospel from the tradition (v.3ff) but uses the tradition to reinforce his gospel. On the other hand, his gospel is not his own privately thought-up affair but something which, for all his independence, he shares with the church.² This continuity in which he claims to stand is seen at 4.7 - the readers were in the intolerable position of owing everything to others and yet claiming independence from it, through the very misuse of what had been given to them! In this, therefore, we should note a certain distinction between gospel and tradition, i.e. whatever be the exact meaning of *τὴν λόγον* (15.2), it is not a sacrosanct formula which enshrines the gospel as if one could preserve the truth by reciting the tradition. Simple adherence to tradition (11.1ff) may not be enough to prevent error.³

The tradition of the Lord's Supper at 11.23ff may also be set

1 Memory and Manuscript p.288ff

2 15.1 οὐτως κηρύσσω, 15.1 εὐηγγελισάμην cf. 7.17, 4.17, 11.16, 14.33, 36 where Paul stresses that what he says he says to all his churches. Gal. 1.11 is not a denial of this but his asserting his right as an apostle called by God to proclaim the true gospel.

3 Wengst "Der Apostel und die Tradition" "Die Formel kann also nach Paulus nur sprechen, wer sie in seinem Sinn versteht. So greift er hier zwar auf Tradition zurück, erhebt aber faktisch in ihrem Gebrauch sein Verständnis derselben zur Norm." pp.160-1.

against the background of Paul's gospel, especially if we recall his use of the building metaphor (3.10ff) with Christ as the foundation in relation to his frequent use of "build up" in the context of worship. Again, one suspects that Paul is not reminding his readers of what they had forgotten but pointing out what they themselves should know, especially if we follow Bornkamm in finding not a lack of understanding of the Supper as a sacrament but a crude sacramentalism.¹ Paul, therefore, seeks to show that as a sacrament it has meaning in relation to the life of the church, so that "discerning the body" means recognition and caring for one's neighbour in love. At 3.9 the readers are already described as a building, based upon Christ - so also in Paul's understanding of worship he bases this upon his gospel of Christ Crucified, the building up of the Body in love over against knowledge which "puffs up".

So far as the actual use of tradition is concerned, especially the unusual ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, attempts have been made to locate the background a) in a Damascus Road kind of revelation (cf. Gal. 1.12), directly from the Lord himself²; or b) taking seriously the tradition language, in Paul as a Rabbi handing on what he himself had received - so especially Gerhardsson who does not feel the unusual ἀπὸ instead of παρὰ to be difficult;³ or c) taking seriously the ἀπὸ preposition, some opt for a combination - so especially Cullmann who, as we have seen,⁴ argues that the exalted

1 "Lord's Supper and Church in Paul" in Early Christian Experience pp.123-160.

2 See Cullmann "The Tradition" p.60ff

3 Memory and Manuscript p.320ff

4 Above p.15ff.

Lord is behind the on-going tradition process as it develops in the church. So also Cerfaux¹ argues that the command "do this" was given to the Twelve as representing the apostles, and Paul also being a member of the group could therefore say that he had received it from the Lord.

It would, of course, take us too far afield to discuss these views in depth, having noted the variety of interpretations of Paul's use of tradition in ecumenical thinking. Of the various views, Cullmann's is appealing in that it does justice to the present reality of Christ within the readers' life and worship. So at 7.10 where Paul quotes a pronouncement of the Lord, there is also emphasis on its authority not only in terms of origin but its present relevance. We may not, however, go as far as Cullmann in finding the exalted Lord behind the tradition as it develops. If, in fact, Paul is countering not a neglect of the Supper but its misuse and is arguing on the basis of a tradition the readers already know and accept, then the ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου recalls the authority of Paul as apostle to interpret the tradition in the light of his gospel, and that this gospel truly establishes what the readers have received in common with the whole church. Thus, we may say that it is not so much a matter of the Lord behind the developing tradition as of Paul's understanding of his gospel of Christ Crucified and of himself as an authoritative apostle who imparts it.

Following on from this and to move away from an over-emphasis perhaps on the Christological nature of Paul's gospel as tradition, we may note briefly and in conclusion the theological nature of

1 "La Tradition selon Saint Paul" Recueil L. Cerfaux II 253-263, p.260-1.

the discussion. We have already observed¹ that behind Paul's description of the gospel as the message of the Cross there lies a whole theological understanding of God's wisdom in relation to the world. It informs the nature of his own task as an apostle of God (15.10), and it is on the foundation of Christ crucified that the Corinthians are established as God's Building, Temple (3.9,16). So the understanding of the gospel and its outworking in the life of the Christian occurs in a cosmic context in terms of God's involvement with the world and the church's response to it. It becomes a matter then supremely of the clash between the world's wisdom and God's, and of the nature of existence in the New Age. Paul's proclamation of the gospel and the traditions he hands on in connection with it reflect his understanding of God's relation to the world and counter a false understanding on the part of his readers.

If, then, we may summarise this study of 1 Corinthians:

- a) We have seen how Paul's argument is varied and deals with a number of subjects but at the same time has an underlying theme, that of God's wisdom revealed in the Cross over against the false interpretation of his readers. The various troubles with which he deals would all seem to have at their root the Corinthians' "enthusiasm", which acts to the detriment of both Paul's gospel and his authority as an apostle who had declared it to them.
- b) In this the child image plays an important part. The word of the Cross is not elementary instruction which should have been left behind, but the central theme of the gospel which the readers

1 See above p.19, 131ff.

have never really understood. The νήπιοι represent an unbaptised state almost, one at least incompatible with an understanding of the Christian life: so also the τέλειοι represent the Christians who are truly motivated spiritually, a devastating criticism on Paul's part of the "enthusiasts".

c) Paul urges them to live a proper life in the gospel as they should; he asks them to imitate himself whose apostleship reflects his gospel, and such traditions as he quotes are also understood in the light of his gospel as the word of the Cross. The seriousness of the whole situation is seen in that Paul is wrestling not with those who had forgotten what he had given to them but with those who had interpreted it in their own way with the result that a crisis had occurred in the tradition process - the "dimension of intentionality", to use Galloway's phrase,¹ had been lost.

The νήπιοι in Ephesians

The use of the νήπιος image occurs at 4.14 in the context of a hortatory παρακαλῶ section. In attempting to understand the meaning here, two features of the letter as a whole are of some importance: a) the hints of baptism that would seem to be present and the concern that the readers should live up to the new life in which they now stand - 4.5 explicitly mentions baptism and there is the language of "putting off", "putting on" (and perhaps, as E. Best suggests, εἰς αὐτόν 4.15 may also have a baptismal ring to it.)² Whether or not 5.26 contains a baptismal reference is

1 Faith in a Changing Culture p.57. See above p.29.

2 One Body in Christ p.149.

disputed.¹ b) There is a frequent contrast made between the readers' present Christian state and that of the world of which they once were a part (1.13, 2.1, 11, 4.17, 21, 5.7, 16), a world characterised by sinfulness, estrangement, lack of direction and ignorance. To this we may further add 4.14 and the varieties of the teachings of men. In contrast to the picture thus painted of the world and its ways there stands the description of the church which is seen as one of cohesion and unity, possessing insight into God's plan (3.1ff) and in which variety is subservient to unity (4.7). The relation between the two is seen in cosmic terms (1.10).

Here 1) the principalities and powers 3.10 are separate from the church since it is to them that the church must make known God's wisdom - whether this is condemnation or is ultimately reconciliation (as E. Best suggests)² is difficult to decide; 2) Christ is here the cosmic Christ as in Colossians, but with the emphasis more perhaps on Christ as king and head of the church. In Colossians the emphasis is on Christ as Lord of all things and not just as intermediary in a kind of gnostic system.

Again, one finds here the contrast between immaturity and maturity, νήπιοι and ὄντη τέλειος, but one must ask how they are contrasted; is it a case of growth and development from beginners in the faith to maturity, or, as is the case with 1 Corinthians, of a contrast between two states rather than stages? One is inclined to adopt the latter answer. Taking account of the two features of the letter we have noted above, νήπιοι is perhaps better understood not as an incipient stage but as a

1 See J.D.G. Dunn Baptism in the Holy Spirit London 1970, p.162ff.

2 One Body in Christ p.145.

state characterising pre- or non-Christian existence. Thus, one is not rendered a νήπιος in baptism, but rather the concepts of growth and unity in the faith are in contrast to the state of the world. So therefore it is not a question of growing from individualism (νήπιοι) to maturity/unity (ἄνθρωπος τέλειος)¹ but a growth in unity in contrast to the disunity which is characteristic of the world.

Here we may note several points: a) that it is not a growth from individualism to unity simply, since unity is something which characterises their past also in baptism (4.1, 3ff), so that growth is also a striving to realise what they already possess. One notes, 2.21, where the readers are already a building and yet (v.22) are still growing; they must live a holy life now and yet must grow into a temple. Growth is seen both from the ground up, i.e. the building grows upon a firm foundation, and from the top down, i.e. Christ fills the church with the fulness of God.

b) The maturity of the individual is bound up in the maturity and unity of the whole, so πάντες plural 4.13 grows to ἐνότητα.² In 4.14, however, the plural πάντες is in contrast to the singular ἄνθρωπος v.13 - cf. μηκέτι (4.17) contrasting with the world outside. Thus one cannot simply equate πάντες and νήπιοι in interpreting the pattern of growth toward maturity. c) In favour of so understanding νήπιοι as a designation of the state of the world, one may compare the "rootlessness" of 4.14 with the "grounding" of 3.18, and the variety of the teachings of men with

1 See Grundmann "Die ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in der Paränese" p.194ff.

2 See du Plessis Teleios p.189.

"speaking the truth in love"¹ (4.15). Such grounding and conversation would then be characteristic of those who no longer are babes but instead are united in Christ upon solid ground.

In this matter, therefore, one feels obliged to disagree with 1) E. Gaugler² who states that the *νήπιοι* are immature in the sense that they have not yet achieved the goal, and also are different from the world for "die Heiden sind nicht *νήπιοι* (Unmündige) sondern tot". Yet, as we have argued, the *νήπιοι* are not those at an early Christian stage but those in a non-Christian state. Of course, the writer declares that growth is necessary, the goal of the *ἄνηρ τέλειος* has not yet been reached. However, in Christ the Christian is already tending toward that goal. Accordingly, the thrust of the writer's argument would seem to be not so much growth from an immature stage to full maturity as growth to maturity/unity which contrasts with the world's disunity.³

2) H. Schlier⁴ who notes that while the term denotes immaturity what is implied is the uncertainty and weakness of an insecure faith. One prefers, however, to contrast the plural *νήπιοι* with the singular *ἄνηρ* rather than to trace the development from early faltering steps in the Lord to full maturity. After all, unity

1 It is difficult to know whether *ἐν ἀγάπῃ* goes with *ἀληθεύοντες* or *ἀσφάλισται* since they belong closely together. Perhaps in view of 5.1 the latter is better, cf. 4.3 where the Spirit is the power of growth and cohesion, so that love and growth are integral.

2 Der Epheserbrief Auslegung neutestamentliche Schriften 6, Zürich 1966, p.180.

3 Contrast, however, J. Armitage Robinson "we are to grow out of our individualism into the corporate oneness of the full-grown Man", St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians London 1903, p.100.

4 An die Epheser Düsseldorf 1965, p.203.

characterises both origin and goal (cf. 4.4ff).

Νῆπιος therefore stands over against the linked images of the building and the body:

a) In contrast to the ignorance of the world (3.10, cf. 4.17ff) there stands the gospel as revealed through the apostle (3.1ff), which gospel the readers have received and believed (1.3, 4.20-21). The church as a building is founded securely on the apostles and prophets, and possibly this may include their teaching as well as their persons, in view of the variant doctrines hinted at in 4.14.¹ So, then, this teaching and knowledge edifies compared to the rival persuasions of worldly men (2.20 contrast 4.14 cf. 5.17)

So far as the building image is concerned, it is difficult to know if ἀπογυνῖαιος is foundation stone or final/locking stone. The latter (Abschlussstein) is suggested by J. Jeremias,² and would fit well with the writer's emphasis on Christ as the centre of the church's life.³ Accordingly, we should probably take the disputed verse 1.23 to refer to Christ filling the church even as he is filled with the fulness of God, i.e. πληροῦμα as "that which is full" rather than "that which fills".⁴

1 But see E. Best One Body in Christ pp.162-3. The prophets are most suitably understood as New Testament ones, contrast 1 Peter 1.11, and probably the apostles also are a continuing class.

2 Article "ἀπογυνῖαιος" T.D.N.T. 1, p.791ff; N.A. Dahl "Bibelstudie über den Epheserbrief" Kurze Auslegung des Epheserbriefes Göttingen 1965, 7-83, esp. p.37.

3 See E. Best One Body in Christ p.142ff.

4 See S. Hanson Unity of the Church p.126ff; E. Best One Body in Christ p.139ff; J.A.T. Robinson The Body London 1952, p.67, distinguishes κεφαλή and πληροῦμα so that Christ's de iure headship becomes de facto.

If they are built up in this fashion they must also live according to what they have been taught (4.20 cf. 1.13) - truth and love are hallmarks of the Christian existence and are the opposite of being in a childish state (4.15 cf. 3.17-18). So the "Christ lesson" (4.20-21) which the readers have learned, the truth which is in Jesus (reading ἀλήθεια rather than ἀληθεία) is in contrast to the errors of crafty men (4.14 note μηχανέται v.14 and v.17). Taking this "learning Christ" in a way similar to Col. 2.6, one understands it to mean not so much a rabbinic idea of transmission in terms of the words and deeds of Jesus as life in relation to the heavenly and cosmic Christ.¹ So one ought to note how the recalling of them to what they already know is linked to radical change and to the putting on of the new man (v.22). The living of this life in accord with what they already know is the opposite of being in a state of νηπιότης.

Moreover, just as speaking the truth in love (4.15) is the criterion for growth and the end of being νήπιοι , so also is this walking in love (5.1) the criterion of being true children. As in 1 Cor., we detect a difference between τέχνη and imitation, and being νήπιοι .² Again, we are faced with a difficulty of understanding how imitation works, whether it is example (de Boer)³ or obedience (Michaelis).⁴ For de Boer, the readers are already

1 Wegenast Das Verständnis der Tradition p.130ff; Betz Nachfolge p.157.

2 Here it is imitation of God, but one notes 5.1 such imitation is closely linked to Christ's love.

3 The Imitation of Paul p.75ff.

4 "μιμῆσθαι" T.D.N.T. IV p.671.

God's children so that their action flows from that fact, while for Michaelis the ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητά is brought in to reinforce the command for obedience, in which case one suspects a certain shift of emphasis to the notion that it is by being obedient that the readers show they are God's children, i.e. that lineage is dependent on action rather than constitutive of it. One prefers the view of Michaelis, certainly the καθὼς of 4.32 and 5.2 are not only exemplary but provide reasons. One wonders, however, if it is not the case that whether by example or obedience one is oneself ἀγαπητός in the act of walking ἐν ἀγάπῃ and that love (5.2) and forgiveness (4.32) become real at the point of personal enactment.

b) Over against the plurality and uncertainty of the νήπιοι state is the growth and cohesion of the body, all πάντες (4.13) growing to the ἄνηρ τέλειος. One cannot separate building image from body image - the two seem to coalesce in the writer's mind (e.g. 4.12 οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος, 2.23 where words used of the body are applied to the building, cf. 3.17). The ἄνηρ τέλειος is the goal of growth and the opposite of νήπιοι. So E. Best remarks that "excessive individualism is a sign of childishness; unity is a sign of perfection".¹ The church, of course, has not yet attained in Christ to perfection, it must grow to that. Yet its orientation to that end and goal in Christ marks it off from the individualism and disunity which are characteristic of the world.

The Church (4.15) grows into Christ, but perhaps one should

1 One Body in Christ p.148

see this in terms of intimate unity rather than complete identification; thus the head-body metaphor symbolises the unity and communion which exist between Christ and the church, which unity "comes from the Head who contributes the love to the Body".¹ H. Schlier seems to go too far² in so stressing the gnostic background that the ἄνθρωπος is Christ who guides believers to unity with himself in the Celestial Man; taking τὰ πάντα with church so that αὐξήσομεν is transitive "cause all things (the church) to grow ----". Yet rather than τὰ πάντα being the church, it would seem (1.23 cf. 3.10) that the church must proclaim God's salvation to all things that all may be summed up in Christ (1.10).³

To sum up, we have found the child image and its use in Ephesians to be similar to that of 1 Corinthians. It denotes not so much an incipient stage beyond which the readers must progress in the faith, as a state characteristic of those who are easily swayed by various teachings and incompatible with a firm grasp of Christian principles on the part of the baptised Christian. So, over against such varieties of teaching, the church's teaching provides cohesion and growth, expressed in the images of the Body and the Building.

1 One Body in Christ p.147

2 Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbriefe Nendeln Liechtenstein 1966

3 See the discussion by E. Best One Body in Christ p.145ff.

3.

In the letter to the Hebrews the writer is also very much concerned with tradition in the sense of the readers' grasp of the gospel, or rather the danger of losing their grasp (2.1, 13.7).¹ The trouble may in part have been due to other teachings (13.9, similar to Ephes. 4.14). Against this background the so-called "pedagogical argument" of 5.11ff forms an important part. The readers apparently were Christians of long standing with a good deal of work and witness to their credit, but who were now in danger of drifting away. There is therefore a continuity between hearing the gospel then and the obligation to respond to present exhortation, having heard and responded initially, cf. 6.4, 10.32, and we may note the writer's stress on "today" (3.12ff) and on "hearing the word" over against the faithlessness of Israel (4.2, 12.25).

In what follows it is hoped to show that the argument of 5.11ff deals not so much with a failure to attain to maturity as a danger of returning to "square one", as if their present Christian state had almost never been. While his argument is similar to Paul's, the writer seems to go further in making use of mainly Stoic ideas, especially defining milk as basic catechesis, but one suggests that his concern is not so much with that but with the danger that the

1 He is also concerned with the power of the gospel to call people out from former ways and traditions, 13.13. What exactly this camp is is difficult to say, perhaps Judaism. See F. Filson Yesterday London 1967, p.60ff.

At any rate the author is concerned with the readers' loyalty to Christ who is constantly present, 13.8, over against weariness and a temptation to let go and lapse back into that from which they came.

readers might actually be in need of it, i.e. are in danger of having to begin all over again. In this, if we allow for the different circumstances in each, νήπιος retains, therefore, something of the sting it has in Paul.

Many commentators argue that νήπιος is here a (retarded) stage of the Christian life. Thus, e.g. C. Spicq states "C'est dire que les Hébreux qui en sort restés à la connaissance du simple catéchisme n'ont pas fait les progrès normaux vers la perfection —";¹ T.H. Robinson remarks that the readers are "like a child who has never learned to use its limbs and to develop its latent powers;"² one must be born again and become as a little child, but there is something quite wrong in remaining as an infant.³ In this he follows a similar line to those who trace a connection between the νήπιος of the gospels and the epistles, and also seems to combine the child image with language of regeneration. Thus generally from this line of argument we may say that there is basically nothing wrong in being a νήπιος ; it represents an early stage of Christian growth. The censure is at the point of failure to progress and get beyond to maturity.

This point of view is open to several criticisms:

- 1) It does not fit very well with the fact that the danger confronted is not that of stunted growth but of apostasy and falling away. The idea of a child growing and being checked in growth is

1 C. Spicq L'Épître Paris 1952 aux Hébreux; also "La Perfection Chrétienne d'après l'Épître aux Hébreux" Memorial J. Chaine Lyons 1950, pp.337-352. cf. H. Williamson Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews Leiden 1970, p.277ff.

2 The Epistle to the Hebrews p.66 Moffat N.T. Commentary London 1933.

3 The Epistle to the Hebrews p.67.

difficult to reconcile with a community which is on the point of regression. H.W. Montefiore,¹ in noticing the fact that the writer does not indeed go back to teaching the rudiments as he has threatened to do, rightly rejects such explanations as that there is a pause in composition, or that the author had been exaggerating. The explanation lies rather in the fact that "failure to progress brings danger of collapse, 'qui cessat esse melior cessat esse bonus'." So also Grundmann remarks "Dieses Abgestumpftsein lässt sie zurücksinken auf den Zustand der νήπιοι ."² In this way the idea of the writer's going ahead to break new ground is to be reconciled with the readers' slipping back in the faith. One may ask, however, whether such a scheme is likely to succeed, and whether in fact an appeal to the imagination in that respect would succeed for those who had apparently lost out on that point and who were νηποὶ-ταῖς ἀνοαῖς (5.11).

2) Babes as a description of an early Christian stage and as a stage of (moral) inexperience 5.13 is strange when put alongside 6.4 where the baptised Christian is enlightened and has partaken of the Holy Spirit. The same would be true at 10.26 where the knowledge of the truth is contrasted with sinfulness. Moreover, if the readers are still only νήπιοι the idea that they are lacking in experience becomes difficult if one recalls that they have apparently been practising Christians for some time. Surely moral discernment (if that is the correct meaning of λόγου δικαιοσύνης 5.13) is or ought to be a possibility for all Christians, even

1 The Epistle to the Hebrews Black's N.T. Commentaries London 1964, p.104.

2 "Die ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in der Paränese" p.192.

though one is required to exercise one's critical faculties (5.14b).

3) The statement of the writer that there can be no second chance, the way in which he seems to stress the seriousness of what they possess as Christians (6.4ff) accords better with a possible return to paganism than with a failure to progress.

In view of this, Käsemann¹ rightly notes that the contrast lies between the enlightened and the ignorant, and that what we have to do with is the opposition between "heavenly" insight and "earthly" ignorance. He therefore disagrees with the attempt of O. Michel² to locate the contrast between νήπιοι and τέλειοι in Old Testament and Rabbinic thought, in the relationship between pupil and teacher so that it is a question of growth to maturity through learning. Michel understands perfection to mean being in a right relationship with God, similar to such other concepts as, e.g. ἀμεμπτος, ὀίκαιος as in Gen. 6.9, Deut. 18.3. He quotes 1 Chron. 25.8 LXX where the "perfect one" is described as he who has learned and can teach.³ Similarly, therefore, at Heb. 5.11, the mature are teachers over against the ignorant; those who have passed through the stage of immaturity (νήπιοι) and are able to teach.⁴ Michel accordingly makes much of the concept of μαρθάνειν - just as Jesus was ὁ μαθών, so also must the readers persevere, "μαρθάνειν ist der Weg zum τελειοῦσθαι".

1 Das wandernde Gottesvolk Göttingen 1957, p.84.

2 Der Brief an die Hebräer Göttingen 1949, pp.139-40; "Die Lehre von der christlichen Vollkommenheit nach der Anschauung des Hebräerbriefes" T.S.K. 106 (N.F.1 1934-5), 333-355.

3 "Die Lehre" pp.338-9.

4 An die Hebräer p.140, "Die Lehre" pp.346-7.

He consequently states that "wir haben nicht zwei verschiedene Gemeindeguppen vor uns, sondern verschiedene Stadien auf dem Lebensweg des Christen".¹

Käsemann, however, points out that Michel's idea of "learning" as the progression to maturity and of Jesus having learned as long as he lived do not agree very well with the idea that apparently the readers should long ago have been past being in need of instruction. Moreover, being *δοιδάσκαλοι* (5.12) does not refer to a special group of teachers but probably belongs to a device found in Stoic circles that one should realise and make full use of what one already knows. Thus, e.g., "what sort of a teacher, then, do you still wait for, that you should put off reforming yourself until he arrives? You are no longer a lad (*μειράκιον*), but already a full-grown man (*ἄνηρ ἤδη τέλειος*)".² It is in this sense also that we may best understand Hebrews 5.11ff - the readers ought to realise what they already know and all that it has brought them (6.4ff). In this sense they are mature or ought to be, but have not, of course, yet reached the goal as if they had nothing more to do (cf. the mature man in Paul as one who, in the Spirit, is orientated to the *τέλος*). This again is like the Stoic, e.g. "the fitting thing for you to do is to live as a mature man who is making progress".³

1 "Die Lehre" p.349.

2 Epictetus Enchiridion 51.1 transl. W.A. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library 11, London 1928.

3 Enchiridion 51.2. We need not here go into the background of this section; Käsemann Gottesvolk p.85 interprets it from a gnostic point of view, but in view of the affinities with Stoic thought we may follow this line rather than a fully developed gnostic one. See above p.63 and p.112.

The writer's use of Stoic themes in his argument is strong and has been well documented. Thus A. Nairne remarks that the "four verses (5.11-14) are more than usually tinged with the literary flavour of the period".¹ Spicq goes further and attempts to show that the writer has actually borrowed a definite form of argument from an actual Alexandrine, Philonic source, but in this he is criticised at length by R. Williamson² who urges caution on the matter. Rather, he concludes, Hebrews and Philo moved in similar backgrounds and it would be hazardous to attempt to find direct literary dependency.

H.P. Owen has gone further in another direction with regard to a Stoic background in detecting in our passage the use of a developed philosophical παιδεία.³ He argues that there are present three stages: νήπιος followed by τέλειος (based on moral behaviour, λόγος δικαιοσύνης being understood as "principle of morality"), followed again by a third stage when solid food may be taken. In Stoic thought this last would be σοφία or μυστήριον which for the writer is the doctrine of Christ as High Priest. That the writer proceeds directly to the third stage (6.1) is best explained a) by the fact that with apostasy near and with time running out, the only cure was to go forward with "an appeal to the imagination", and b) by the fact that θεμέλιος is but dull catachetics and to go back over that would only make matters worse.

1 The Epistle to the Hebrews p.65 Cambridge Greek Testament, Cambridge 1917. See J. Moffat The Epistle to the Hebrews I.C.C. Edinburgh 1924, p.69ff.

2 Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews p.277ff.

3 "The Stages of Ascent in Hebrews 5.11-6.3" N.T.S. 3 (1956-7) 243-253.

In this, however, one feels that Owen has perhaps been too ingenious and has read too much into the passage. For the writer $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$ and $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma$ exist in contrast (as they do in much Stoic thought also) rather than in terms of continuity, at least in the sense that the writer laments the readers' lack of maturity. If in fact he does criticise them for being in danger of going right back to the very start, then the reason why he does continue at 6.1 lies in the knowledge that the readers are not that bad.

If then we may paraphrase what we have understood to be the force of the writer's argument, it would be that the readers who are slothful and in danger of apostasy (2.1, 3, 5.11, 6.12) are really in danger of going right back to the beginning, of being in the awful position of never having been evangelised. This for him is no exaggeration but serves to bring out the very real danger in which they stood. We should notice that the reference to milk (5.13) precedes babes, i.e. the author seems to build up his criticism - they are in need of being taught all over again, they need milk and those who need milk are babes, babes ignorant of good and ill. For the Stoic, $\nu\eta\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$ represents instability, lack of rational balance¹ (cf. Is. 7.16, Deut. 1.39). For the writer, the readers are not so much unstable because they have restricted themselves to the theological alphabet, so to speak, but because the need to teach that alphabet shows that they are in the unhappy position almost of never having been taught,² i.e. v.13b adds to v.13a. Thus the readers are like those who never

1 See Spicq aux Hébreux 1 p.55; Williamson Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews p.295.

2 Contrast Williamson Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews p.295.

heard the gospel, and what a judgment, therefore, that is on those who have tasted the gift of the Spirit and have been enlightened!

In this regard, we may note the following points:

a) The writer apparently goes further than Paul in describing the milk diet as basic catechesis summarised at 6.1, but perhaps we should be careful about reading too much into the distinction between this and solid food, even though the basic instruction seems to contain little Christological content as such. Michel, for instance, describes the catechesis as "Anfangsverkündigung"¹ over against deeper teaching found in Chapters 7-10. One feels, however, that the writer is concerned not so much with detailing this initial diet, but that the readers seem to require it, and, in this way, the distinction in diet itself forms part of his argument that his readers should be mature. In this case the στερεὰ τροφή is not an esoteric teaching reserved for those who are more advanced intellectually, but reflects the failure of the readers to understand what they already possess. So Owen remarks aptly enough: "the author's message is δυσσεμνήνευτος (v.11) not because it is intrinsically remote (as is the στερεὰ τροφή of Philo and Paul) but because the community is dull of hearing".² So, also, B. Rigaux remarks "dans l'entendement et la parole des parfaits, il n'y a pas uniquement une science dépassant celle des fondements".³ But one need not agree that this separates Paul from Hebrews - although Hebrews perhaps owes more to Stoicism, both in their hortatory

1 an die Hebräer p.63.

2 "Stages of Ascent" p.251.

3 "Révélation des Mystères" p.258.

purpose make essentially the same point; for Paul it is "become in the Spirit what you already are", for Hebrews, "recover what you are in danger of losing".

We may perhaps, therefore, leave open the question whether the στοιχεῖα (5.12) are a kind of derogatory ABC,¹ "an arbitrary selection" dealing more with "dogmatic precision than with spiritual reality",² or whether, as θεμέλιον (6.1) suggests, there is a continuity between this and the understanding the writer expects of his readers (cf. 3.6 οἶκος). The writer seems rather to use such an argument as this, including the distinction in diet, as part of his exhortation, 13.22 λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως i.e. he is not so much interested in defining different levels of tradition relevant to different stages of growth, as in urging his readers to hold on to what they have (2.7, 3.14) while pointing out the danger they were in, namely of wiping out all their hard won gains (10.32) and having to go back to the very start, as if it had never been. That the writer therefore proceeds at 6.1 is not because re-doing the foundation would only make matters worse and time was short, as indeed it may have been (Owen), nor is it exaggeration simply because the danger was real enough, nor because failure to progress meant only to regress (Moffat and Montefiore). Rather it was because the writer knew that things had not reached

1 This seems preferable to the view of J.C. Adams "Exegesis of Heb. 6.1ff" N.T.S. 13 (1966-7), 378-85, that it represents "what Christ himself taught" (p.381) with the understanding that what was wrong with the readers was that "their faith is in what he said, not what he did" (p.384), the need for accepting not only his message but also his person and work.

2 Owen "Stages of Ascent" p.248.

that point (6.9) and that they had not committed apostasy. They still ought to be mature and he proposes to treat them as such.

b) We may, with du Plessis,¹ take 6.1 ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερόμεθα not as "let us press on to what is mature", a movement from elementary to full understanding which does not wholly agree with the readers' falling away, but as "let us devote ourselves to mature matters" since this is what, as Christians, we purport to be (cf. 2.1). Thus, as parallel to 6.1a ἀφέντες τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον the τελειότητα denotes not so much perfection as the end process of ripening, but mature matters, subject matter appropriate to the mature; du Plessis maintains that "the primary property of 'teleios' here is the 'maturity of apperception' in pedagogical or tutorial respect".²

c) The στερεὰ τροφή we may link to λόγου δικαιοσύνης in the contrast between νήπιοι and τέλειοι. The writer here seems very much at home in the ideas of his day, e.g. his use of ὄπισθος, ἔξω and of the adult mature person as one who exercises his reason and critical faculties. One may perhaps even detect a hint of criticism in this mention of experience (cf. 5.12 διὰ τὸν χρόνον) over against the readers' long standing as Christians.

How exactly we should understand λόγου δικαιοσύνης is not clear. Héring suggests "theology"³ and others something like the doctrine of justification by faith.⁴ This latter seems out

1 Teleios pp.208-9.

2 Teleios p.208.

3 The Epistle to the Hebrews London 1970, p.42.

4 See Spicq aux Hébreux, p.144.

of place especially where the writer is making use of Greek ethical ideas. On the other hand, many argue for a wholly ethical emphasis (e.g. Owen "moral standard",¹ with λόγος as standard or norm). But this is not entirely satisfactory since apostasy would seem to involve more than moral danger. Williamson² links it with an understanding of Christ; in effect with good and bad Christological interpretation of the Old Testament, which he also admits would have moral and ethical results.

Some help may perhaps be obtained if we compare 12.11 where also one finds a similar *γεγυμνασμένους* and *δικαιοσύνης*, here in a context of a call to the readers to understand their troubles in a theological perspective (v.9), a call which serves to reinforce what they already possess and should truly realise (v.12-13). Something of this may lie behind 5.14 where the mature man is one who is in control of the situation and can accurately discriminate between good and evil, who can choose the right path (cf. Test. Asher 1.5, 6.3). The emphasis here is perhaps on experience and the close relation between living one's life and using critically one's powers of discernment. Consequently, such a man will accept adversity and even find it useful in the pursuit of an upright life (12.11). That God disciplines those he loves, that suffering can be understood positively as a sign of God's favour is an idea found both in Jewish and Greek thought (cf. Prov. 3.11 quoted by the writer, 13.24, Eccclus. 22.3, Job 5.17; in Philo De Praemiis 163 and in Seneca De Prov. iv.7).

1 "'Stages of Ascent'" p.245

2 Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews pp.289-90

In this way the mature person, and the Christian as a man of faith, in the pursuit of a righteous life, combines both ethical and theological reflection. In this way also, endurance becomes possible and emulation of men of past ages is very meaningful, (6.12, Chap.11).

This, however, leaves unsaid the great theme of the writer, for he does not advocate a kind of Stoic endurance for its own sake but is concerned with his readers' faithfulness to their calling and to the purposes of God. This theological concern is given expression in his theme of Christ as High Priest and Christ as ἀρχηγός, who as Mediator is qualified by his having been obedient and known weakness and suffering. This description of Jesus as the lowly righteous one whom God has exalted is one we have already encountered in the Gospels and Paul, and is one which is especially emphasised by the writer. He especially combines deepest humiliation with highest majesty - Jesus as the one who is pre-existent (10.5ff) and who sustains creation (1.3), Jesus as the one who knew human weakness and suffering and death. Although much emphasis falls on Christ's heavenly intercession, he intercedes as one who has known mankind, one who can truly sympathise (2.10, 18, 4.14). Thus, as Leader and Pioneer, as one who has himself endured, he can guard and help those who also must endure. In this (cf. 12.2, 13.13) the writer comes near to an idea of imitation, but for him Jesus is not just an example but the ground and cause of hope and salvation - it is on him that faith depends. It is only because his course is complete that endurance on the part of the readers will bear fruit. The knowledge

of this, as mature Christians, should bring them consolation and encouragement and help them to live a good life amid difficulties.

We may add another small point to this theme of the exalted Christ who has himself shared their sufferings which serves as an exhortation to hold on to what they have received and not to slip back into former ways, even at the cost of hardship (13.13). At 10.32 the writer recalls their past faithfulness to their Christian calling, so that the witness of past experience confirmed the gospel testimony.¹ Cheerful acceptance of hardship, then, may also have something to say to the endurance of hardship now. And incidentally if we have been correct in linking 5.14 with 12.11, then such an understanding of affairs at 10.32 could scarcely be made by *νήπιος*, but is rather the mark of maturity. The writer is very conscious of the present, of "the existential power" of the gospel (the army of the faithful of all ages is even regarded as incomplete without them (11.40)), with a stress on now and today; but significantly this does not obliterate previous responses but rather the obligation of having accepted the gospel then increases the urgency of hearing it again. Thus, within the tradition handed on is included the readers' past experience as part of it, and the recall to what they should know is the recall to rediscover it anew in themselves. In this we should note, too, how the details of Jesus' humanity so much emphasised by the writer belong integrally to the exalted Christ, so that they are almost continued and rendered ever present in the abiding Christ, i.e. the one who is "the same yesterday, today and

1 See above p.21

forever" (13.8) is the one who experienced weakness and humiliation, so that that weakness and humiliation belong in all their relevance to the gospel in its claim upon the readers in the present.

In sum, then, we note that in Hebrews $\nu\eta\pi\epsilon\iota\omicron\iota$ stands not so much for "Christian beginners", those newly baptised whose only fault is a failure to progress to a mature understanding, but as a description of those who fail altogether to understand what has been given to them, who lack the reasoned maturity which should become the true Christian.¹ In this the writer is in some ways similar to Paul although making more use perhaps of Stoic categories of thought. For both Paul and the author of Hebrews, the meaning of their readers' baptism and hence their very existence in the Christian life is called in question, but from different perspectives. This is perhaps most clear from the imagery of the wanderings of Israel in the desert (1 Cor. 10.1ff and Heb. 3.10); for Paul it is a warning to live a godly life in the Spirit such as is given to them at baptism, for Hebrews it is a warning against lack of faith in God. Unlike Paul, Hebrews does not connect the example of Israel with the sacraments, but considers baptism from the wider perspective of faith and perseverance and the implications of apostasy. It is not, of course, that the mature man is already perfect (12.2) but it is the mark of the mature man that he should understand what he has received and resolutely persevere. Consequently the writer does not elaborate upon a double standard within the faith, the distinction in diet serving his main argument of encouraging the readers to maintain their faith. He couches

1 Contrast Michel "Die Lehre" pp.346-7.

such encouragement in a picture of Jesus as High Priest associated with the theme of the suffering Righteous One of God whom God has exalted.

CHAPTER FOUR

Having considered the use of the child image at other central points in the New Testament, in order to ascertain more clearly its use in 1 Peter, we may now return to 1 Peter and to the image of the child at 2.1ff.

In explanation of the phrase ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη , reference is often made¹ to a very similar phrase amongst the Rabbis that a proselyte is "as a newly born child".² The parallel would seem to be strengthened in view of the hints of baptism in the letter generally, especially 3.21, the language of regeneration in the Section 1.3 - 2.10, the unusual βρέφη - literally "embryos", and the apparent similarity to 1 Cor. 3.1 and Heb. 5.12ff, all pointing reasonably to the readers as newly baptised Christians. It is also appealing in that something of the way in which the Rabbis understood the phrase may be found to be present in 1 Peter - thus

a) the comparison of the proselyte with a newly born child meant that he had no past,³ his previous life was as if it had never been, and in 1 Peter the writer frequently exhorts the readers to have done with their former life, contrasting it with their new life in the gospel;

b) the comparison meant also that the proselyte was without sin.

1 See F.L. Gavin The Jewish Antecedents to the Christian Sacraments London 1928, p.51; E. Sjöberg "Wiedergeburt und Neuschöpfung im palästinischen Judentum" Stud. Theol. 3-4 (1949-50), 44-85; Strack-Billerbeck Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch ii p.420ff; W. van Unnik "Christianity according to 1 Peter" p.81; D. Daube The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism p.103ff.

2 Yeb. 22a, 48b, 62a (cf. Bek. 47b)

3 Sjöberg "Wiedergeburt" p.48.

E. Sjöberg indeed argues¹ that this was not the point of the comparison. He disagrees with Strack-Billerbeck's statement² "Worin die Gleichheit mit dem Kinde besteht, muss Zusammenhang ergeben, meist liegt sie in der Freiheit von Sünde und Schuld", on the grounds that one cannot make Rabbinic understandings of childhood and sinlessness normative for the particular comparison of a proselyte to a newly born child here.

Yet it does seem difficult to exclude this latter understanding altogether. After all, something of this other general idea is bound to have entered into the particular comparison here, and also included in the wiping out of the proselyte's past is the forgiveness of all his sins. To be fair to the Rabbinic mind here, one cannot separate the legal status of the proselyte from its moral and religious implications, even though the comparison of the proselyte with a newly born child features so often in legal issues. So also the writer of 1 Peter frequently exhorts his readers to lead a life without sin and free of wrongdoing, cf. 2.1 ἀποθέμενοι --- in relation to being ὡς ἀπτιγέννητα βρέφη.

Despite this, however, there are difficulties in accepting the suitability of this Rabbinic idea here, even though it is remarkably similar. The point is that the Rabbinic comparison is just that - a comparison; the proselyte is always likened to a newly born child, but never is it said that he actually is one

1 Sjöberg "Wiedergeburt" p.46.

2 ii. pp.422-3; see C.G. Montefiore and H. Loewe A Rabbinic Anthology pp.301-2; cf. Hermes Sim. ix, 29.3 "ὡς νήπια βρέφη εἰσιν, οἷα οὐδεμία κακία ἀναβαίνει ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν. See also T.F. Torrance "Proselyte Baptism" N.T.S. 1 (1954-55), 150-154, esp. p.152.

or has been "newly born". Thus Sjöberg correctly remarks¹ that "der Proselyt gleicht einem Neugeborenen. Es wird nicht gesagt, dass er neugeboren ist". But this is exactly what one finds at 1 Pet. 2.2, that the βρέφη are newly begotten, and therefore the comparison involved in ὡς is not that of the Rabbinic phrase. Further to this, the idea of divine begetting which lies behind ἀπειρένητα (cf. 1.3, 23) is something avoided by normative Judaism, which prefers to express God's activity in terms of re-creation. Even Philo apparently seems to avoid saying that the Israelites were begotten by God.² To this extent Paul also follows this tendency, expressing God's act in Christ not as rebirth but as re-creation; and incidentally since he avoids the idea of re-generation, one finds another reason for rejecting the idea that at 1 Cor. 3.1 the νήπιοι are newly begotten at baptism. It is significant also that at John 3.4 Nicodemus, as an orthodox teacher, has difficulty just at the point of "being born anew". Furthermore, if as we have seen in the introductory chapter on 1 Peter, the baptismal

1 "Wiedergeburt" p.45, cf. Windisch Die Katholischen Briefe p.59.

2 Ps. 2.7 in the Targum becomes "and innocent as though I had this day created thee". cf. also Tanchuma to Exodus 4.12 "I made thee a new creation as a woman conceives and brings forth" (cf. Gospel of Thomas log. 10: "(My) true (Mother) she gave me the Life".) Qumran 1 QSa 2.11 perhaps talks of God begetting the Messiah (cf. Ps. 2.7), ט'ל' , but this reading is disputed and one may read: ט'ל' . See F.M. Cross The Ancient Library of Qumran London 1958 p.64, "Qumran Cave 1" J.B.L. (1956), 121-125, esp. p.124. See Büchsel "γεννάω" T.D.N.T. 1, 668-9, also R. Brown St. John's Gospel p.138ff and C.K. Barrett The Gospel according to St. John London 1965 pp.171-2 generally. On the question whether "begetting" and "creating" belong to different circles see F.C. Burkitt Christian Beginnings London 1924, p.109.

context of the letter should not be over-stressed, then the comparison between 2.2 and the Rabbinic phrase becomes that much more remote. So also προσερχόμενοι (v.4 cf. 3.18 προσαγάγη) need not mean "proselyte" or suggest the 17p of the Qumran recruit, but may simply be an echo of Ps. 34 from v.3.

If a Jewish proselyte context is not suitable, will a Hellenistic initiation one fit any better? The idea of divine regeneration and particularly the unusual ἀναγεννᾶν, ἀρτιγέννητος may point in this direction.¹ Perdelwitz, as we have seen, puts the letter as a whole against the background of the Mystery Cults, and the passage most cited for 2.2 is from Sallust's De Deis iv "ἐπὶ τούτοις γάλακτος τροφή ὥσπερ ἀναγεννωμένων".

No doubt the readers living in Asia Minor would be familiar with ideas of the Mysteries, and the use of γάλα here, in contrast to that of Paul and Hebrews, suggests something pure and spiritual, a kind of divine drink affording growth. Thus a cup of milk, or honey and milk mixed together, was given to the initiate and one may find an echo of that here (cf. Ep. Barnabas 6).²

There are, however, objections to this approach also. The use of milk itself need not require a context such as this since it seems to have been widely used as an image in the Ancient World.³ In Judaism, in fact, it was used as a description of the Torah and learning.⁴ Nor is it in any case a divine drug here which

See R. Reitzenstein Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen p.262.

2 See K. Schelkle Die Petrusbriefe p.54ff.

3 See above p.119; in the later church Clement of Alexandria discusses at length the idea of God's Word as milk on which the Christian babe is nourished - "to the babes who seek for the Word, the breasts of the Father's kindness supply the milk" Paedagogus I c.8.

4 See below pp.175-6.

guarantees salvation in the sense of removing its recipients from their present responsibility in the world. It is difficult, as Perdelwitz' attempt shows, to interpret the letter consistently as a polemic against the Mysteries, and such an approach can hardly do justice to the theme of the readers as God's people Israel and the strong eschatological emphasis in the letter. Nor may we press overmuch, as we have argued, the writer's use of $\nu\tilde{\nu}\nu$ and $\delta\pi\tau\acute{\iota}$ which may belong to the early church's paraenesis rather than point to a specifically baptismal context.¹ Moreover, the idea of rebirth mentioned at 1.3, 1.23 and 2.2 need not contain a reference to baptism itself (cf. Titus 3.5 where indeed the two are specifically connected, but contrast James 1.18 and 1 John 3.9 (cf. 2.28-9, 4.7, 5.1, 4, 18) where they are not; also at John 3.3 Bultmann and others have argued² that $\epsilon\tilde{\kappa}\ \tilde{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}$ is an insertion). One notes in Jas. 1.18, John 1.13 and 1 John 5.1, 4 that rebirth is linked rather to the gospel and faith in Christ. Thus there would seem to be a certain fluidity in the use of rebirth imagery, and baptism is not necessarily implied or prominent.³

In 1 Peter rebirth is based at 1.3 on Christ's Resurrection, and at 1.23 on the living and enduring word, taking the adjectives with $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ rather than with $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$ (note in both cases $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ as preposition). At 2.2 it is connected with partaking of the divine milk, since their origin and goal and the means of growth are all

1 See P. Tachau 'Einst' und 'Jetzt' im Neuen Testament Göttingen 1972 p.16ff.

2 See R. Brown St. John's Gospel p.141ff.

3 See M. Chevallier "1 Pierre 1.1 à 2.10: Structure Littéraire et Conséquences Exégétiques" R.H.P.R. 1971 No. 2, 129-42, esp. p.139ff.

the same. While, therefore, we may not rule out baptism altogether in 1 Peter - the reference at 3.21 would be strange if it did not feature generally in the writer's thought in some way - nevertheless we may say that an understanding of the gospel and of Christ himself, of the necessity of obedience and faith, are uppermost in his mind as a description of the baptismal life of the Christian, rather than baptism as such.¹ This would seem to be borne out by 1.10ff, 1.22ff, 2.8, 3.1, 4.17, 5.12 which all deal in one way or another with the gospel and what they have received. Even 3.18ff and the explicit mention of baptism are, as we shall see, most suitably understood against this background of the writer's understanding of the gospel and of the readers' faith in it and obedience to it. Thus, we may say that at 2.1ff the image of the child points not so much to an explicitly baptismal context as to a particular understanding of the gospel, which for the writer forms the central element of the baptised life of the Christian.² Consequently those themes of the letter which seemed so close to the Jewish understanding of the proselyte as if he were a new-born child - the exhortations to have done with former ways and to live a sinless life - are based not so much on baptism itself as on an understanding of the gospel and its implications for the readers' life.

1 Büchsel's criticism that "Windisch's statement that 'according to the whole context baptism is to be assumed already as the background' is not only unsupported but incorrect" seems therefore a little harsh; "γεννάω" T.D.N.T. 1 p.674.

2 Thus one notes how the imperative of the quotation $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$ has been changed to $\epsilon\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$ i.e. tasting is not the result of the new birth so much as part of all that regeneration means, and forms the basis for the imperative.

In asking what this understanding of the gospel is for the writer and what its implications are for the readers, we approach again the question of the gospel as tradition. We have already noted that in the process of handing on the gospel there is always an element of interpretation and adaptation at work, and judging from the variety of Christologies in the New Testament, it is not simply the case that Christ as the content of the gospel is handed on from one to another but there is constant change and reinterpretation in the process. Accordingly, as we have discovered through the image of the child, it becomes a matter not simply of receiving the gospel but of how it is understood and assimilated, with the possibility (as we have seen in 1 Cor. and Hebrews) of failure to understand it properly and carry through its implications for the Christian life. There is always an element of risk in the tradition and the traditionary process.

We may note something of this also at 1 Peter 2.2. The writer apparently (1.12) had not himself evangelised the readers,¹ but on the other hand the gospel they had received was itself the cause of the difficulties which now faced them - the hostility and non-acceptance of the gospel (2.8) in effect began with the first preaching of it. The writer for his part seeks to answer the problems by showing how the gospel may deal with the difficulty it itself has brought. He reinterprets it to show its relevance for

1 Contra Grundmann "Die NHIIOI in der Paränese" p.197. E. Best remarks that "1.12 does imply that he was not one of the original missionaries of the area" 1 Peter p.14.

those who have accepted it. The writer of our letter may not indeed be an original thinker in the manner of Paul or John or Hebrews and may lack the depths and insights of those writings, but he is an extraordinarily eclectic writer and it is here that his genius lies. He has the ability to adapt and combine diverse elements to serve his purpose, to demonstrate the relevance of the gospel for his readers and to exhort them to remain obedient to it.

For the writer the gospel means "the sufferings and subsequent glories of Christ" (1.11-12) - even this is not a "novum" on his part since, as we shall see, behind it lies the figure of the obedient Righteous One which we have already encountered, and which seems to underlie a great deal of the New Testament understanding of Christ. Yet his use of it is unique.

Much of the remainder of this chapter will be concerned with how the writer unfolds this understanding of the gospel in relation to the readers as "newly begotten babes" and their present circumstances, but we should briefly note here how such a summary of the gospel as this is related to other passages of profound Christological content, e.g. 1.18ff, 2.21ff and 3.18. Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories the writer declares to be the sum of the gospel that had been preached to them (1.12), and running all through the letter is this theme of the readers' continued adherence to the gospel given to them (1.23ff, 2.2, 3.1 and 4.17).

In the letter, more emphasis is laid upon Christ's sufferings than upon his death as such. Of course these sufferings include his death also, and there is no doubt about the vicarious nature of that death (1.20 "for your sake"; 2.21 "for you"; 2.24 "our sins";

3.18 "for sins"). In this, he seems to draw upon a variety of ideas rather than upon one particular sacrificial rite, e.g. 1.18ff suggests the Passover Lamb, while 2.22ff recalls the Servant of Is.53.12 and also the idea of the Scapegoat of Lev.16. While the writer obviously sets forth Christ as an example for the readers to follow in enduring adversity, yet it is by virtue of Christ's atoning death that they are rendered sinless. Consequently Christ is not simply a paradigm, a model to be copied, but is unique and pre-eminent as the one who by his death and resurrection has made blameless endurance possible.

If, however, the readers are made righteous by Christ's atoning death, the writer is also concerned to portray that death as the expression of a life of sinless obedience, and dwells much on the sufferings of Christ as the Righteous One of God (cf. 2.21ff; 3.18 $\delta\iota\chi\alpha\iota\tau\omicron\varsigma$, cf. Heb.12.2; Luke 21.19; 1 Thess.1.6; 2 Thess.3.5). So then within the context of the pre-eminence of Christ, the portrait of Christ as an example to be followed is a compelling one for those who in obedience to their calling find themselves in straitened circumstances. They who by Christ are made righteous are enjoined to follow Christ who himself suffered blamelessly and was vindicated by God.

Vincent Taylor points out "the small extent to which the resurrection is related to the atoning work of Christ, despite its prominence in Petrine thought (cf. 1.3, 21, 3.21). Only in 1.21 does it appear in a soteriological passage; and here it is appended to, rather than integrated with, the statement about redemption, in a reference to the faith of the readers in God".¹ Yet the thought of

1 Vincent Taylor The Atonement in New Testament Teaching London, 1963, pp.32-33.

Christ's exaltation is never very far away; apart from 1.21, it is there at 2.25 in the description of Christ as Shepherd and Guardian, and at 3.18 in the contrast $\thetaανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς$

$\deltaὲ πνεύματι$. It is however of interest to note that in these soteriological passages, reference is made to the effect of Christ's atoning death upon the readers before mention of his resurrection. This suggests that as Christ's death delivered them from sin, so it is that in living holy and obedient lives they know also the victory which he has wrought for them.

Again, we ought not to forget the essentially theological framework of the readers' faith (1.21), based upon what God has done in Christ, which perforce includes the resurrection; just as by Christ's death God makes men righteous (3.18), so by Christ's resurrection they possess a living hope (1.3). So Christ's suffering/death and exaltation/resurrection are closely connected as part of the theological structure of the readers' faith in a time of trial and testing. As God vindicated Christ his Chosen One who suffered and died to make them holy too (2.23, 3.18), so they in enduring hardship as God's holy and obedient people realise the victory he has prepared in Christ on their behalf. Indeed though Christ was vindicated after suffering (1.11), that victory is so near and real to them that even now their present trials are being transformed and transfigured by it.

The writer also seems to share the idea of the gospel as dynamic encounter: the word about Christ is itself Christ's word in which the power of God is seen to be actively at work (cf. 1 Thess. 2.13, Gal. 1.11). Thus the gospel has already made itself felt in the readers' lives and they can call upon experience $\epsilonγγύσασθε$ (2.3) to

corroborate what the writer is saying.¹ Also, he makes a close connection therefore between gospel and Christ, but without going as far as the Johannine identification of λόγος and Christ; thus at 2.2 ἐν αὐτῷ may be ambiguously either "in it" or "in him", and this is backed up with a play on χρηστός - Χριστός. The milk on which the babes feed is in some way Christ himself, just as the word preached to them is the imparting of Christ himself - to it they owe their origin as babes both in time (1.25 ὁῦμα of the evangelists) and in principle (1.23) as divinely begotten.

Thus for the writer, hearing the word in faith is receiving Christ, but for him Christ is the one who suffered and was exalted (1.11). The Christ-milk on which they feed is the suffering and glorified one, and it is through faith in and obedience to Christ understood in this way that they grow. 1.25 recalls 1.12 as regards the preaching of the word, and also 1.23ff - ὁῦμα perhaps comes in under the influence of the Is. 40.6 quotation and preserves a certain distinction from λόγος as God's word, while yet maintaining that God's power is at work in the proclamation of the gospel by men. So also θεὸς (ἡμῶν) has been changed to κύριος in the quotation, so that God's word which endures is the word of Christ, 2.3 κύριος. The adjectives qualifying milk in v.2 may also point in the direction of the gospel understood as Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories, in that Christ is the one whom God exalted and hence the milk is spiritual and will truly afford salvation λογικόν; and in that Christ exalted yet suffered as God's righteous one the milk is also

1 The eucharistic argument, suggested by L. Lohmeyer "Von urchristlichen Abendmahl" Theol. Rund. 9 (1937), 273-312, esp. p.296, is not convincing despite the use of Ps. 54 in the later church in this regard; it is supported by Kelly amongst modern scholars Epistles of Peter and Jude p.87. However, the idea would seem to be not so much union with Christ in the sacraments as the understanding of the gospel; see E. Best 1 Peter pp.98-99.

ἄδολον .

That λογικόν means "spiritual" seems preferable to the A.V. "milk of the word" which links it directly with 1.23. In view of the close association between gospel and Christ already present in γάλα , it seems awkward to make a further link in the adjective. Others, on the basis of stoic thought and the use of Rom. 12.1, prefer "rational", but again one need not find a Stoic background here and the idea of a λόγος σπερματικός does not seem to be present at 1.23 (nor at James 1.18). The translation "spiritual" is favoured by the link between λογικός and πνευματικός in the mysteries and the Hermetic Corpus.¹ It is, therefore, a "divine drink", in the sense that God having exalted Christ - 2.2 ἀρτιγέννητα also recalls 1.3 ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς - those who partake of him through faith in the gospel received obtain salvation.² It may also hint at the references to God's spirit at work in the process of handing on the gospel, 1.12 (cf. 1.11 and 1.2), and in the life of those who receive it, 2.5 (cf. 2.10); ἄδολον recalls the preceding δόλον and perhaps also 1.22, 2.1. Rather, however, than being a polemic against the "impure" practices of the mysteries, it recalls Christ as the righteous one which underlies the description of the gospel at 1.11.

This gospel which the readers have received, Christ as the sufferer and exalted one, contrasts strongly with their former ways which they had inherited from their fathers (1.18) and perhaps, even, there is a play (backed up by the use of regeneration) between what they have received from their human fathers and what they have

1 See Reitzenstein Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen p.328ff; R. Knopf Die Briefe Petri und Jhd Meyer's Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Göttingen 1912, pp.85-86; Perdelwitz "Das Problem" p.65ff; T.D.N.T. iv "λογικός" (Vittel) p.142ff; see also C.F.D. Moule "Sanctuary and Sacrifice in the Church of the New Testament" J.T.S. n.s. 1 (1950), 29-41, esp. pp.34-35.

2 Though a divine drink it is not, however, an automatic thing "σύνδλος τρώχον, heiligend", cf. Reitzenstein Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen p.329, Perdelwitz "Das Problem" p.61.

received from God as their spiritual and true Father (1.17 cf. notably Matt. 11.25). W.C. van Unnik has shown admirably¹ the importance of such inherited traditions in Greek thought (there is nothing here of a polemic of the church against Judaism) as something real and vital, and the measure of the writer's criticism, therefore, in terming them vain is noteworthy; one might also contrast the ἀναστροφὴ based on each (1.18 cf. 2.12 etc.). It points also to the probability that the writer's frequent exhortations to obedience and to have done with former ways reflect a real temptation on the part of the readers to commit apostasy.² The writer's description of such traditions as vain contrasts with the purposeful and enduring nature of the gospel (1.3 ἐλπίδα ζωῶσαν 1.23, 2.2).

If, then, the context of 2.1ff is not explicitly a baptismal one but reflects especially in γάλα an understanding of the gospel and Christ himself, as the suffering and subsequently glorified one, what are we to make of ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη ? We shall argue that the writer has here woven together two themes, that of Israel as reflected in βρέφη, and that of regeneration as reflected in ἀρτιγέννητα. The common denominator about which they revolve is the gospel, because, as God's obedient people Israel, their obedience to the gospel is obedience to God who has begotten

1 "The Critique of Paganism in 1 Peter 1.18" in Neotestamentica et Semitica Studies in honour of Principal Matthew Black, Edinburgh 1969, pp.129-42.

2 See I.H. Marshall Kept by the Power of God London 1969, p.158. E. Best 1 Peter p.85 suggests that at 1.13, if sobriety is taken closely with the preceding reference to "minds", then the writer may perhaps be urging the reader to stand firm in face of strange ideas (cf. 1 Thess. 5.5-8) occasioned by the immediate expectation of the End.

them through it. The description ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη is virtually tautologous, since βρέφη are literally embryos, or very young children (cf. 2 Tim. 3.15 ἀπὸ βρέφους "from childhood", Luke 1.41, 44, where it is used of the unborn child).

Thus one is tempted to pay attention to the adjective as well as the noun; also, the image of the child is to be distinguished here from its use, as we have noted it, in Paul, Hebrews and indeed Matt. 11.25, in that the writer connects the image directly with regeneration. In this he seems to approximate to e.g. John 1.12-13 where child, faith and divine begetting are linked together (cf. 1 John 3.9-10, 5.1ff). The writer's use of the image here, however, is particularly interesting and striking in the close way in which he combines child/understanding and regeneration themes, and in the way that this combination seems to be part of the larger framework of his thought.

1) That the writer makes much of the identification of the church with Israel is very evident.¹ The controversy between church and Judaism seems to be over, and the church has appropriated in wholesale fashion the titles of Israel for herself. So, for example, the church is seen to be God's elect and holy people, Israel amongst the nations (2.12 cf. 4.17). Indeed the whole complex from 1.1 culminating in 2.9-10 is full of allusions to the Old Testament, with the church now appearing as the Exodus community (cf. 1.18). The lamb here is perhaps best understood in this light of Exodus

1 See P. Richardson Israel in the Apostolic Church Cambridge 1969, pp.171-5.

and Passover, although W.C. van Unnik has argued strongly¹ that rather what is meant is the proselyte offering of Lev. 22.25, taking this as the clue to the letter's meaning. One notes that Christ is not explicitly identified with the lamb but that the adjectives reflect not only ritual purity but moral sinlessness,² recalling 1.11 and Christ's sufferings as the Righteous One.

In regard to the imagery of the church here as the obedient Israel, the Exodus community awaiting the End, one is struck by the similarity to many of the ideas at Qumran - even the idea of being pilgrims (1.1, 2.11) refers not so much to distance from the homeland (contrast Hebrews) as to keeping apart from what is unclean: the writer's intense apocalyptic expectation makes the former unlikely (1.3, 4.12ff). The close similarity between 2.4ff and Qumran has been well documented,³ and the readers of the letter are also obedient to the truth and are garrisoned as a community in it (1.5, 1.22 of the unusual $\lambda\acute{\iota}\thetaοι \zeta\omega\acute{\nu}\tauες$ 2.5). In view of this, the child image at 1 QH. 7.20ff, which we have already compared to Matt. 11.25ff and to 1 Cor. 4.14ff, is again noteworthy in relation to the $\beta\rho\epsilon\phi\eta$ at 2.2. In the Qumran image the Teacher, presumably, likens the covenanters to babes who feed upon milk in accepting the instruction he gives them, so obtaining the knowledge of God's

1 De Verlossing 1 Petrus 1.18-19 en het Probleem van den eersten Petrusbrief Medeleelingen der Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, pp.1-106, esp. p.36ff.

2 See F.J.A. Hort The First Epistle of St. Peter 1.1-2.17 London 1898, p.77; E. Best 1 Peter pp.90-91.

3 See particularly B. Gaertner The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament Cambridge 1965, esp. p.72ff; D. Flusser "The Dead Sea Sect and pre-Pauline Christianity" Scripta Hierosolymitana iv (1958), 215-66, who attempts even to posit a common original at 1 Peter 2.4ff.

" י'ר' : It is also interesting to note, as M. Mansoor points out,¹ that the Qumran image may in part be drawn from Num. 11.12 and the picture there of Israel as a recalcitrant child during the Exodus, with Moses as the father.

Milk, as we have seen,² was widely used as an image of special instruction and understanding - similar to 1 Peter 2.2 but more elaborate is Odes of Solomon xix.1ff³ (cf. iv.10, viii.16, xxxv.5)

"A cup of milk was offered to me;
And I drank it in the sweetness of the delight of the Lord.
The Son is the cup
And He who was milked is the Father;
And He who milked Him is the Holy Spirit
Because His breasts were full;"

We may also refer here to the way in which the Targum translates Is. 28.9: "To whom will he teach knowledge? ---- them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts" by "To whom was the Law given, and who was commanded to understand wisdom? Was it not the house of Israel, who were beloved above all nations and cherished above all kingdoms?"⁴

Thus we may surmise that βρέφη / γάλα fits well enough into the context of the readers as God's people who possess insight and

1 The Thanksgiving Hymns p.91; see also O. Michel and O. Betz "Von Gott gezeugt" Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche - Festschrift J. Jeremias Berlin 1960, pp.3-23, esp. p.14; "Nocheimnal 'von Gott gezeugt'" N.T.S. 9 (1962-3), 129-130.

2 See above p.109 Note 1

3 The Odes and Psalms of Solomon Rendel Harris and A. Mingana Vol. 2, London 1920.

4 cf. Targum Isaiah 55.1-2, and also the examples cited in Montefiore and Loewe A Rabbinic Anthology pp.163-4, 189-90.

understanding; and this is further strengthened if, as we shall see, later, we recall that the readers are like Christ himself, also regarded as God's suffering righteous ones after the manner of the Maccabean martyrs and of the Righteous One of the Psalms and in the Wisdom of Solomon.

2) The concept of divine regeneration was, as we have already seen, something which normative Judaism tended to avoid. Attempts have been made to detect this idea at Qumran in the covenanters as a spiritual family, but the evidence is not very satisfactory.¹ Even if the difficult 1 QH.3 does refer to the birth of the community by the Teacher, in the light of 1 QH.7.20ff, in both cases this is not so much divine regeneration but only what one finds in normative Judaism, the idea of begetting through instruction. So also 1 QH.9.35-6 (cf. vs.30-31) and the description of God as Father does not go so far as to say that God actually begets, and the theme of being God's spiritual family may be expressed without reference to divine begetting or regeneration. We need not find this here any more than at Matt. 11.25 where God is also described as Father, imparting secrets to the understanding community. This being so, at 1 Peter 1.17 the idea of God as Father and the readers as his spiritual family need not require "regeneration" but the relationship is made that much more close through the idea of divine begetting which he uses.² If the writer was not the first to connect the church and Israel, neither was he probably first in the field with regeneration through the word (cf. James 1.18, 1 John 3.9).

1 See O. Michel and O. Betz "Von Gott gezeugt" p.3ff.

2 See above p.98 Note 1.

His genius, it would seem, lies in his bringing them close together in the composite image of the child here in serving his purpose of exhortation.

In view of these facts, therefore, we may suggest that the writer has indeed brought together the theme of Israel as God's chosen and obedient people, and of regeneration and growth through the word, so that he has underpinned the readers as $\beta\rho\epsilon\phi\eta$ who possess true understanding (1.21 "truth" over against "vain traditions" 1.18) with regeneration. We may support such a conclusion at 2.2 by noting how at 1.3ff regeneration is combined with inheritance, and how at 1.22 obedience, which recalls 1.13ff and the readers as God's holy people, is combined with regeneration through the word.

Such a conclusion seems preferable in face of two other suggestions beside the "wholly baptismal" one:

- a) That, e.g., of M. Boismard¹ who notices a Rabbinic comparison to Israel as a new born child on receiving the Law, Cant. r. viii.2.1 (cf. Pesiqta 61b), which is appealing in view of the writer's stress on the readers as Israel, the Exodus motif and so on. Yet, ultimately, this is a variation of the proselyte theme already discussed, and the comparison remains only that and does not imply divine regeneration as in 1 Peter 2.2.
- b) J.H. Elliott² also notices the unusual combination of word-birth-growth imagery (2.1-3), and that of election (and holiness) as God's people (2.4ff). The two lie alongside each other and

1 Quatre Hymnes Baptismales p.30ff.

2 The Elect and the Holy Leiden 1966, p.206.

are linked on the basis of a common relationship to the person of Christ. This, however, would seem to be simply stating the obvious, and, as we have suggested on the basis especially of Qumran, the theme of God's people is present already in *βρέφη* and *γάλα*, denoting God's righteous ones who possess the truth. That the idea of special understanding lies behind both "babes-growth" and "stone-building" images makes the transition from one to the other less abrupt than it seems.¹

The common basis of this combination is the gospel and an understanding of Christ contained in it: a) in the following sections we shall examine how the author works out the relation between the readers' election and holiness as God's people and the gospel as Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories - in this there is at work an "ambiguity" about Christ's sufferings, including both his death and his righteous endurance, which allows the writer to make a close connection between Christ and the Christian; also there is at work a double understanding of Christ as the Righteous One and the readers as righteous ones; (Although this description of Righteous One and righteous ones does not occur explicitly in 1 Peter, who prefers to describe the readers as chosen, holy and obedient, yet we may properly use it in working out the parallel between Christ and them in the writer's mind. As we shall see presently it does lie behind 1.11, whereby Christ as God's Righteous One (cf. 3.18) endured faithfully and triumphed, and the readers as God's holy and chosen people in Christ are exhorted likewise to be righteous and endure faithfully (2.20ff, 3.14ff, 4.13ff).) b) so also by summarising the gospel that had been preached to them (not by himself presumably (1.12)) as

1 Contrast F.W. Beare The First Epistle of Peter p.95.

Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories, and by maintaining their divine regeneration through the word, he binds this gospel and its meaning most securely to their existence as Christians; so much so indeed that they can actually imitate Christ (2.21ff, 4.1).

In interpreting and adapting a variety of strands and ideas in this way, the writer comes to grips with a "crisis of tradition" in which the question is urgent: Why suffer for the gospel one has received, why not return to the old ways of one's fathers which present an attractive and real alternative? Against this background it is interesting to recall here, by contrast, the Jewish description of a proselyte as if he were a new born child in a context of suffering - "R. Hanania son of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: Why are proselytes at the present time oppressed and visited with afflictions? Because they had not observed the seven Noachide commandments (i.e. they suffer because of previous wrongdoing as Gentiles). R. Yose said: One who has become a proselyte is like a child newly born. Why then are proselytes oppressed? - Because they are not so well acquainted with the details of the commandments as the Israelites."¹ (i.e. in citing the comparison Rabbi Hanania must be wrong because a proselyte's past was non-existent and hence the reason must lie elsewhere). It is clear that 1 Peter 2.2 (where the readers are ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀρρέοντες who know Christ as the suffering and exalted Righteous One) is quite different from this as an answer to the problem of suffering.

Before proceeding to examine how the writer unfolds the implications of this interpretation of the gospel for his readers, we may briefly summarise our findings thus far -

a) To think of a baptismal context for 2.2 is not wholly suitable, neither with reference to Jewish proselyte baptism nor Hellenistic initiation rites. Rather the writer's concern is with the gospel

¹ Yebamoth 48b.

handed on to the readers and their obedience to it (1.11ff, 1.23ff, 2.8, 3.1, 4.17) and this for him is the essential point of the baptismal life. We have suggested that the letter really deals with a crisis of tradition in which, at a time of challenge and difficulty, the readers are forced to weigh the worth of the Christian gospel which they have received against former ways and customs.

b) Behind $\beta\rho\acute{\epsilon}\phi\eta$ and $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha$ there lies the idea of particular understanding and insight as part of the writer's exhortation to them to retain their allegiance to the gospel. The evidence from Qumran at this point is impressive, especially in view of the close identification in the letter of the church and Israel. In his description of the readers as God's obedient Israel, God's suffering righteous ones, the milk nourishment afforded them is very much tied up with the rightness of the church's claim about the gospel. Presumably the nourishment hinted at in 1 QH. 7.20ff represents the pesher traditions by which the community understood the Old Testament. This is similar to 1 Peter 1.10-11 (cf. 1.22 "the truth", in which the witness of the Old Testament is made plain with reference to Jesus' sufferings and glories). The milk here (2.2), however, is ultimately personal, denoting Christ himself, though with particular reference to the suffering and exalted Righteous One of God. For the writer, the Old Testament witness points not just to Christ but to Christ understood in this way.

c) Regeneration through the word underpins this theme, so that the gospel, understood as Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories, to which they must be obedient, informs their very existence as Christians and the pattern of their Christian lives in the world.

That the writer is concerned with the gospel as it presents an answer to the readers' problems seems preferable to the interesting theory of F. Danker that the section 1.24-2.17

represents a consolatory use of Old Testament prophecies.¹ In these, Israel's sufferings had been seen mainly as the result of her disobedience. The writer, however, in the light of the current situation adapts the quotations within the general context of an emphasis on Israel's original calling and purpose. So then "the sufferings of the new community come not because of disobedience but in spite of obedience. ---- This is consolatory because the new Israel is assured that her situation is not the same as that of Israel at the time the prophetic consolations were given."² In this way Danker notes that the writer attempts to come to grips with the current situation in a genuine fashion. "The writer of 1 Peter utilises the prophetic consolation and exhortation but in application to a fresh situation where the cause and effect relationship is completely different."³ The writer, therefore, we might say, adapts traditional understanding in the light of a new and pressing need.

One notes, indeed, the importance of the Old Testament for the writer and its influence on his understanding of his readers and even of Christ himself as God's Righteous One. But despite this interesting attempt to show that the writer is no mere traditionalist, one feels that Danker has not sufficiently noted the place of the gospel in the writer's thought and its application to the readers as consolation and obligation. This would seem to be necessary both at 2.8 and 4.17 where the readers, as Israel, are

1 "1 Peter 1.24-2.17: A Consolatory Pericope" Z.N.W. 58 (1967), 93-102.

2 "A Consolatory Pericope" p.100.

3 "A Consolatory Pericope" p.100.

placed firmly in the context of response to the gospel, and it is also congruent with our understanding of the child image which binds the two closely together. As we shall see, there is a close interaction in the writer's thought between the readers as Israel, the righteous obedient ones, and the description of Christ as the Righteous Obedient One (1.11). It is from this interaction that the aims of consolation and of exhortation are derived.

In the foregoing we have noted how the writer describes his readers as God's chosen and obedient people Israel through the gospel which they received and believed; to this he brings another concept - that of regeneration so that he binds this gospel which they have received to their very existence as Christians. This gospel the writer understands as Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories (1.11). In the following section it is now hoped to show a) on the one hand how, through linking the themes of Israel and regeneration in relation to the gospel thus understood, the writer maintains in his own way that which we have noted at other points in the New Testament, that the Christian shares Christ's way in humiliation and exaltation; and b) on the other hand how, in working this out, he combines two different emphases contained in this gospel of Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories.

a) For the writer, the readers share in some way in the experience of Christ, so that what was true for him is also true for them. In its own way 1.11 is a remarkable summary of the gospel - that he describes it in this manner is not due indeed to his own originality since the paradoxical theme of Christ's sufferings and subsequent

glories is one which we have already come across, and which has made a profound impression on the New Testament at many points.¹ We may, however, admire its succinctness here.

It is not, of course, possible here to deal with so large a theme beyond recalling, e.g., that for Matthew Jesus is the lowly king who is yet the Judge (25.31ff) and that for Luke Jesus goes up to Jerusalem on a journey through death to glory. Moreover, the disciples in following Jesus share the same road and themselves take up the Cross. In Hebrews we find the great High Priest who learned obedience through suffering and who is also ἀρχηγός for his followers (13.12). In Revelation the Lamb in the midst of the throne combines humiliation and exaltation (5.6ff, 7.14) and he is the one who leads his followers (14.4). So also Jesus, as God's Righteous One who, being obedient, was exalted, is of importance to Paul - not only is it a matter of Jesus' death, but the death of the Righteous Obedient One in fulfilment of the Law which is vital for Paul.² Moreover, the Christian, because he acknowledges this Christ as Lord, must partake of that righteous obedience in his life, (cf. Phil. 2.6ff in its context of v.5). In 1 Peter also this theme is apparent in which the readers follow in the way of Christ who passes through suffering to glory.

Here we may perhaps make two brief observations: a) In presenting Christ as an example to be followed, the writer also uses

1 See E. Schweizer Lordship and Discipleship London 1960; H. Anderson Jesus and Christian Origins Oxford 1964, Chap. vi "Earthly Suffering and Heavenly Glory" pp.241-306.

2 W.D. Davies Paul and Rabbinic Judaism p.265ff; Anderson Jesus and Christian Origins p.270ff.

a theme which we have already encountered in examining the child image elsewhere, e.g. discipleship in the gospels, Paul's request for imitation, in Hebrews Jesus as Pioneer. It is difficult to draw absolute distinctions between authors, but 1 Peter does offer the person of Christ as a real example for imitation. Paul's use of μιμησις is as we have seen very much tied to his understanding of the gospel and his authority as an apostle to impart it, and this distinguishes it from 1 Peter and his quite direct imitation of Christ. b) Following on from this we may note how Paul understands "suffering with Christ".¹ In distinction from 1 Peter, Paul rarely talks of Christ's sufferings (2 Cor. 1.5, Rom. 8.17, Phil. 3.10 and Col. 1.24), and prefers rather to speak of Christ's death and of the Christian dying with Christ, being crucified with Christ, being dead to sin and so on. Consequently, suffering with Christ belongs to what Paul means by the Christian's having died with Christ and to the fact that he lives in the New Age of God inaugurated by Christ and under his Lordship. Participation in Christ's sufferings rather than being a kind of "Passionsmystik" refers therefore to participation in the Messianic Woes (cf. 2 Cor. 1.5 τοῦ Χριστοῦ),² i.e. as Paul has died with Christ and so participates in the New Age, so the tribulations that occur for him and the church as

1 See E. Best One Body in Christ p.130ff; R.C. Tannehill Dying and Rising with Christ Berlin 1967, p.84ff; A. Schweitzer The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle London 1931, p.141ff; C.M. Proudfoot "Imitation or Realistic Participation" Interpretation 17 (1963), 140-60; M. Carrez "Souffrance et Gloire dans Paul" R.H.P.R. (1951), 343-53.

2 E. Best One Body in Christ p.130ff; Tannehill Dying and Rising with Christ p.84ff. See above p.131 on Phil. 2.5, where Jesus as the Righteous One is not simply an example but is decisive for the whole new existence inaugurated by God through him.

Christ's body are seen as participation in the birth pangs of the New Age as the Old one is passing away (Rom. 8.18). Fellowship in Christ's sufferings as participation in the Eschatological Woes is, as we shall see, a theme also of 1 Peter, but he links this to an imitation of Christ that is different from Paul's. Also in 1 Peter, the Pauline dialectic of dying and rising with Christ is absent in that for the writer the Christian's life is based on the having been raised with Christ (1.3); nor is there in 1 Peter the Pauline concept of "the body" - in the two 'imitatio Christi' passages (2.21, 4.1) the Christian is not related to Christ through the concept of the body but through imitation.¹

We may now return to our original point, having noted some of these differences. 1 Peter, by linking obedience to the gospel and regeneration through it, and by describing that gospel as Christ's sufferings and glories, follows a wide trend in the New Testament whereby the Christian partakes of the same experience as Christ whom he follows. Through regeneration, this gospel becomes part of the very fabric of the Christian's life; just as, we may say, in 1 Thess. 2.13 the gospel in which God's power is at work was seen to have been accepted through the same power being at work in its recipients, so here the gospel of Christ's sufferings and glories is at work, is coming true, in the readers' existence;² and, conversely, that this is so is proof of the gospel's trustworthiness. The question now arises how the writer works this out in relation to the situation, how the gospel of Christ's sufferings and glories is related to

1 See J.A.T. Robinson The Body p.48, Note 1.

2 It "actualises" itself, to use Geiselman's description, above p.25.

Israel, God's elect and holy people.

b) In developing this relation between gospel and readers, the writer makes use of two distinct though closely connected emphases. If we may again summarise them at the outset, they are 1) the gospel as consolation in accordance with the readers as God's chosen people, and 2) the gospel as exhortation in accordance with the readers as God's holy people. In so far as the gospel received has been ultimately the cause of the readers' troubles by marking them off from their surroundings (cf. esp. 4.3ff), the writer, as we have said, faces a crisis of tradition, i.e. is what they have received worthy of their adherence to it when it brings such difficulty, and if so what solution can it itself offer as a means of coping with the situation? In distinction from Paul, as we noted above, the writer speaks frequently of Christ's sufferings and only once apparently at 3.18, reading ἀπέθανεν, of Christ's death. He seems to prefer the idea that Christ suffered, which of course does include the fact of his death, almost as a kind of studied ambiguity in order to give him a close point of contact with the readers. We may now examine in detail his use of these twin emphases of consolation and exhortation.

1) The gospel as consolation

We may begin here by comparing 1.11 with 4.13 and noting what seems to be a contradiction, namely that 4.13 speaks of the Messianic Woes and eschatological glory while 1.11 speaks of Christ's personal sufferings and glories. At 4.13 (cf. 5.1) we find τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν, literally "sufferings of the Messiah", and the

context (cf. esp. v.17) is strongly eschatological so that the sufferings which the readers endure are part of the Messianic Woes.¹ On the other hand, 1.11 would seem, most suitably, to refer to Christ's personal sufferings and glories. Selwyn indeed,² noting the somewhat awkward form of the verse, argues carefully for a translation "sufferings of the Christward road", and maintains that the prophets here are not those of the Old Testament but of the New Testament who look forward to the Messianic Woes and to the glories that follow. By and large his suggestion does not seem to have won much approval; it does not solve the awkwardness of the passage, and one prefers to follow the traditional interpretation that these are prophets of the Old Testament speaking of Christ's personal sufferings and glories. The unusualness of the expression may be accounted for from the point of view of such prophets looking forward from their perspective,³ and the plural possibly refers to the totality of events involved in Christ's exaltation (cf. 3.22) rather than, as Selwyn maintains, to the glory to be enjoyed by Christians.

The relation therefore between 4.13 and 1.11, the sharing in Messiah's sufferings and glories, would not seem to be simply that the readers, in suffering, share mystically in Christ's sufferings,⁴ nor is it simply that Christ is an example for the readers, in that

1 See Best 1 Peter p.162ff.

2 Selwyn First Epistle of Peter p.299ff; cf. C.A. Scott "The Sufferings of Christ. A Note on 1 Peter 1.11" Expositor 12 (1905), 234-40.

3 Hort First Epistle of St. Peter p.54.

4 Best 1 Peter p.162ff.

as Christ suffered and was glorified so also will they.¹ The idea of imitation is twice used, at 2.18ff and 4.1ff, and on both occasions Christ serves not as an example of suffering but of sinless suffering. This belongs to the other emphasis used by the writer and will be considered below. Moreover, any idea of Christ as example is absent from 5.6 where one might have expected it, had the exemplary nature of Christ's sufferings as such been prominent in the writer's mind.

Rather, the connection between 4.13 in which the readers rejoice in the Messianic Woes awaiting the glory to follow and 1.11 which deals with the personal sufferings and triumphs of Christ is, as we would understand it, that the gospel is proof that God will vindicate his elect and consequently it is indeed worthy of their continued belief in it.² The relation between Christ's sufferings and glories is seen as proof that, despite rejection by men, the last word remains with God, and consequently since this "reversal of fortunes" is written into the gospel itself, they should not worry that men may reject the gospel and themselves who adhere to it. Thus, in this emphasis of the writer the idea of Christ as the Righteous One (3.18) which, as we have seen, lies behind the gospel of his sufferings and subsequent glories, tends to remain in the background in favour of the readers as righteous ones (4.18).

1 Contra Michaelis "πρόχω" " T.D.N.T. V p.922.

2 Comparing e.g. Luke 24.26, we may note a certain shift in that no longer is it a question of Christological apologetic, i.e. why did Christ die, as an explanation of the actual events of Easter, but serves rather to emphasise the importance of the gospel for its recipients in face of suffering, as an answer to the question: why do Christians suffer?

Also, Christ's sufferings are viewed not so much as stemming from righteous obedience (in Paul to the Law), as from rejection by men, and the stress falls on τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας and the fact that God has exalted him. For the readers, therefore, as righteous ones the gospel (1.11) is proof of God's vindication of the righteous.

We recall here a) that the writer sees his readers as God's chosen people, and also note in this connection the place that Psalm 34 has in his thought. It is quoted twice, 2.3, 3.10-12, and is possibly alluded to elsewhere. This psalm treats of God's deliverance of the afflicted righteous,¹ the necessity for them to adhere to his precepts and how God will not allow evil to triumph. Thus the βρέφη at 2.2 are seen as God's righteous ones who have tasted the Lord's goodness, quoting Ps. 34.9; it is interesting therefore to note that the Psalm in 1 Peter always refers to the readers and not to Christ as part of a Passion apologetic.² 4.13, which speaks of the Messianic Woes, mentions that the readers "rejoice in suffering" recalling 1.6. b) W. Nauck³ while discounting Selwyn's somewhat elaborate "Persecution Document" theory has nevertheless isolated this phrase "rejoice in suffering", tracing its origin back to the inter-Testamental period (cf. Baruch 48.48, 52.5, 54.16) and finding its context among the faithful righteous who endure trials, set against an apocalyptic drama of strife between light and darkness (cf. Wisdom 2.10ff, 3.5-6 cf. 1 Pet. 1.7).

1 See also Danker "A Consolatory Pericope" p.99.

2 B. Lindars New Testament Apologetic p.97.

3 "Freude im Leiden" p.68ff.

Such a context would suit 1 Peter in which the End is soon expected, when God will vindicate the righteous and silence opposition; 2.12 fits better the Day of Judgment¹ in view of the general eschatological framework of the letter than the time of the conversion of those who behold the Christians' good deeds. The readers' suffering is seen against the background of the cosmic Christ (3.18ff) with Satan as a prowling lion (5.8) and themselves as God's elect called out from the surrounding darkness (2.9). Although the writer's choice of "suffering" (1.11) forges a link between Christ and the readers, and consequently Christ also in suffering is seen as the Righteous One, this latter remains in the background in favour of the readers being the suffering righteous ones whom God will vindicate; also, Christ's sufferings and glories according to this emphasis point not so much to the obedience of the Righteous One as to his vindication, despite his being rejected by men. Thus the reversal of fortunes, a feature of apocalyptic in general and which appears in this letter also, is given its sanction in the gospel itself. The balance shifts in the writer's use of the theme here from Christ as the suffering Righteous One to the readers as God's righteous ones, with the declaration that God's vindicated Christ is proof that God will vindicate his elect who adhere to the gospel and suffer on its account.

Within the context of 4.12ff and the readers' rejoicing in the Messianic Woes, it is not at all surprising therefore to find a reference to the gospel (v.17) and to their opponents' rejection of it. We have already noted how obedience to the gospel is for

¹ See W.C. van Unnik "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter" N.T.S. 1 (1954), 92-110, esp. p.103ff.

the writer the important thing rather than baptism, that this is the "Schwerpunkt" so to speak of the baptismal life (5.12, reading *οἰκτιρε* imperative rather than *ἐσθίκατε* indicative, 1.23, 2.8, 3.1). On those who obey the gospel, the corollary of 4.17, God's righteous elect, the messianic woes are coming, but since the gospel itself points to vindication, adherence to it is a consolation since their faith is faith in the exalted Christ (cf. 1.21 and the close connection between *δόξαν* and *πίστιν*), and the sufferings they endure are but the prelude to glory (1.6 *δύλον* 5.10 *δύλον* contrast 5.10 *τὴν αἰώνιον δόξαν* ; cf. Wisdom 3.5 "And having borne a little chastening, they shall receive great good").¹

Having considered 4.13ff in relation to the opposition to the gospel 4.17, we may further strengthen our conclusion by looking at the section 2.4ff, which also includes the question of disobedience to the gospel 2.8. It is not, of course, possible to deal with all the points of this complicated and much discussed passage, but only with what seems relevant to our enquiry. The writer, one suggests, has strung together in a free composition traditional elements which lay to hand, moulding them to his own purpose. This seems preferable to R. Harris' *testimonium* theory, or to Selwyn's idea of a hymnic source.² The writer continues here from 2.1ff to develop his combination of themes reflecting the readers as God's people regenerated through the word. Concerning the writer's use of Old Testament quotations, J.H. Elliott argues

1 See Hebrews 12.7 where discipline is a sign of God's favour (above p.143). In 1 Peter if suffering has a purifying effect, it is for the testing of faith 1.7, 4.12 rather than the removal of sin. See below p.217ff.

2 First Epistle of St. Peter p.268ff. See discussion in J.H. Elliott The Elect and the Holy p.129ff.

at some length that vs.4-5 are a midrashic commentary making along with the following vs.6-10 two stages of expression: "v.6-7 (8) and 9(10) represent a primary layer close to the wording of the Old Testament and v.4ff a secondary stage of reflected formulation".¹ One prefers, however, to take the view that the quotations simply confirm what has been said or introduce a new point in the argument. This view is put forward by E. Best² after an examination of the writer's use of Scripture generally.

We recall that behind the description of the readers as *βροῦν* (v.2) there lies the idea that they are the privileged recipients of revelation, similar to what obtains in the Q Synoptic tradition with *νήπιαι*, and at Qumran; this revelation is the gospel so that the milk on which they feed is indeed Christ the suffering and subsequently glorified One. This the writer works out in v.4ff through a series of epithets descriptive of Israel applied to the readers, combined with an understanding of Christ as the one who, though rejected by men, was yet chosen by God (cf. 1.11). Since this whole section 1.3-2.10 is predominantly consolatory in emphasis,³ stressing the privileges of their election by God (1.3ff, 1.12, 1.18ff, 2.7, 2.9-10) and since the question of their obedience to the gospel is still very much in his mind (2.7-8), it would seem that, as at 4.12ff, the writer understands the gospel of Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories in a consolatory way here, i.e. Christ is the one who, though rejected by men, was yet chosen by

1 The Elect and the Holy p.20.

2 "1 Peter 2.4-10 A Reconsideration" Nov. Test. 11 (1969), 270-93.

3 See Danker "A Consolatory Pericope" p.93ff.

God, the emphasis again being on the vindication of the elect.

At 2.10 in comparison with Rom. 9.25, the quotation from Hosea is altered. It no longer refers to the admission of all equally to the privileges of Israel, but to the readers as Israel in the contrast between belief and unbelief. It is faith in this one who, though rejected by men, was chosen by God that the readers possess (2.6) and consequently God will vindicate his chosen ones; cf. v.4 which hints at Ps. 118 but with reference to the readers. This is made clear especially at v.7 by the insertion in the context of the unbelievers of Ps. 118.22 before Is. 8.14, that God, as it were, has turned the tables and consequently it is they who believe the gospel who possess honour, v.6 τιμή . To establish this further, we may note one or two points.

a) We may note the absence of the prefix ἐπὶ to οἰκοδομεῖσθε v.5 (cf. 1 Cor. 3.10ff, Ephes. 2.20, Col. 2.7), following Nestle text, and also the absence at v.6 of reference to foundation, which occurs twice in Is. 28.6. It may be due simply to the greater importance of the Temple imagery for the writer rather than the building imagery,¹ but equally it serves to bring out the importance for the writer of the readers' faith in Christ as a key factor in the building process, in so far as the stability of the building depends upon their faith as "living stones" in Christ as "Living Stone". They are a building not so much through being built upon Christ as a building through faith in Christ.

b) If one is correct in finding in the language of v.4 the

1 See R.J. McKelvey "Christ the Cornerstone" N.T.S. 8 (1961-2), 352-359; The New Temple Oxford 1969, p.128. So indeed in relation to 4.17 we may note Ezek. 9.6 that God's judgment begins with the temple. cf. L. Gaston No Stone upon Another Leiden 1970, p.219ff.

influence of Ps. 118.22, quoted later at v.7 in full, then it may be of significance that the "fate" of the stone, its reaching the head of the corner, is replaced by the description of the stone drawn from Is. 28.16 that it is elect and precious; i.e. the emphasis falls not so much upon the stone as on its elect and chosen nature despite its having been rejected, and this again gives a close point of contact with the readers' situation.

c) As at 4.12ff and the use made there of the content of the gospel as Christ's sufferings and glories, there seems also to be present here a certain shift in emphasis in the use of the quotations. They refer no longer to a defence by the church of the Passion, and the controversy between Judaism and the church (see above p.189 Note 2), but to the importance of faith in the gospel, with a reminder to the readers that they should not give up even though they find themselves rejected by men. Rather ironically, whereas at Matt. 21.42, Ps.118 served to argue the removal of the promises from Israel to the church, here in 1 Peter it serves to support the church now as Israel in face of unbelievers; so at v.7 the quotation confirms the "rejected by men" of v.4 with reference to their critics, and at v.12 the church as Israel is amongst the nations.

Also as at 4.12ff Christ is not predominantly an example, as if to say that as Christ was rejected by men but chosen by God, so also are they. Rather the writer seems to take rejection for granted, beginning from where the readers find themselves, as a common denominator, and stresses the theme of election despite rejection in exhorting his readers to continue to adhere to the gospel. God will vindicate his chosen people who believe the gospel, because the gospel in which they believe is proof of it.

d) The link made between Christ as the living stone and the readers as living stones is a striking one. Christ as the living stone recalls 1.3 and the resurrection, i.e. the exalted Christ, and so also the figure of the Christians as living stones recalls the fact of their regeneration through the gospel, participants in Christ's risen life. The fact that the readers are described as stones is noteworthy in itself - it is an unusual description, perhaps hinted at in Ephes. 2.10, but recalls again a theme of the Qumran community. Indeed, 2.4ff as a section is very similar to expressions and ideas which occur at Qumran; thus the covenanters describe themselves as tested stones in a firm wall (cf. 1 QS. 8.4ff, 1 QH. 6.25). So also the readers in 1 Peter appear fleetingly as a garrisoned community (1.5).¹

The connection between the image of the child and that of building (eased perhaps by προσερχόμενοι, under the influence of Ps. 34) is, as we have seen, not so abrupt as might be thought.² Thus child and building imagery are played on in Rabbinic thought, are found together in Paul, and also at Qumran where the covenanters are nourished upon secrets and are built up on a foundation of truth (cf. 1 Peter 1.22).

In view of this, and taking into consideration the varied use

1 In so far as the readers as a garrisoned community rejoice in suffering, we may note LXX Ps. 115.24 "ἀγαλλιασόμεθα καὶ εὐφρανσώμεν ἐν αὐτῇ" in relation to the stone theme.

2 See above p.107 Also J.M. Ford "'Thou art Abraham'" p.296ff, and C.N. Hillier "Spiritual Milk --- Spiritual House" Tyndale Bulletin 20 (1969), 126, though his citing of Gen. 16.2 may not be apposite in view of 1 Peter 2.2 divine regeneration.

of the stone imagery in Christological understanding,¹ what the writer appears to have done is to combine two ideas that were known to him - one of a stone complex referring to Christ and one referring to the community as stones. This seems to be preferable to the suggestion of B. Gaertner² that the writer developed the notion of Christians as stones from Christ as the living stone. Because of his emphasis upon the readers as God's righteous and chosen people, the idea of the Christians as living stones would seem to be primary. Through regeneration they share in Christ's risen power, and this he then connects with Christ as the living stone, "living" being interpreted as chosen by God, corresponding to 1.3 resurrection/exaltation, despite being rejected by men. The writer's development of the description of the suffering and glorified Christ (1.11) in this passage as the rejected and elected stone suggests that for him the Resurrection is the sign of God's approval and the confirmation of Christ's being chosen (cf. Rom. 1.4). Christ's exaltation implied in the description of him as a "living stone" is interpreted with reference to the stone's being chosen and precious, though it/he was rejected by men. This connects closely with the thought of the readers as God's chosen people - cf. ἔντιμον with v.7 τιμή and also εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας v.7 as a description of Christ's exaltation in the context not so much

1 See C.N. Hillier "Rock-Stone Imagery in 1 Peter" Tyndale Bulletin 22 (1971), 58-81; Lindars New Testament Apologetic p.169ff. S.H. Hooke "The Corner Stone of Scripture" in The Siege Perilous London 1956, pp.235-49; J. Jeremias T.D.N.T. IV "λίθος" p.268ff; Selwyn First Epistle of St. Peter p.268ff.

2 The Temple and the Community in Qumran and in the New Testament p.75. In support of the primacy of the community reference see L. Gaston No Stone on Another p.213ff, esp. p.222.

of the readers themselves as of their opponents and of opposition to the gospel.

When we recall the connection, already noted, between child and building images, it is unlikely that the begetting through instruction, as e.g. in 1 Cor. 4.15, is the same as the regeneration of the βρέφη here, since ἀπαιχθέννητα refers to divine regeneration. Moreover, the writer had not himself evangelised the readers, begotten them in the gospel so to speak.¹ Nevertheless, through the connection of child/growth images to that of stone/building, we may say that the understanding of the gospel and of Christ himself, which is the content of their nourishment and means of growth, is the same understanding by which they are able to be built up, cf. 1.5 the readers as a garrisoned community who possess the truth (1.22). At 2.2-3 in the link between the two images there is a consistent description of the readers as God's favoured people who, through the privileged knowledge of the gospel, of Christ as the one who was exalted after suffering, themselves remain secure in that knowledge that God will vindicate his elect.

This adaptation of the gospel they have received, this interpretation of the tradition is aimed by the writer at encouraging the readers to adhere to their calling in face of hardship which makes a return to former ways and traditions very enticing; a return both to the anonymity of their surroundings, no longer being marked out as "different" by reason of the gospel's requirements, and to the honouring again of their fathers' ways which exerted so strong an influence on the general life of the day. The writer's

1 See above p.167.

summing up of that kind of life which was theirs before conversion, (4.3ff) may indeed be accurate, but for all its faults and the criticisms that could be brought against it from the Christian perspective, we should remember that it was the traditional pattern and that departure from it was bound to raise all manner of questioning just because it would have been so noticeable; in this way we may perhaps sense something of the tension involved in the situation, recognising the tremendous influence and pull of tradition. Equally, however, the writer felt that the Christian tradition should also exert an influence and that a stronger one. So in interpreting the gospel for the current situation, he declares that the truth which they possess contrasts with their opponents' traditions; theirs is vain over against the purposeful one which the readers possess (1.18 cf. 1.4, 2.2). Moreover, in his purpose of exhortation he highlights the irony of the situation, comparing 3.15 with 4.5 - "sub specie aeternitatis" the matter is really the other way round; note λόγον in both cases, 4.3ff emphasising the difference between the readers and their opponents with their vain ways, and also the use of βιωσαι 4.2 in relation to ζῶσαν 1.3 and their life as ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη 2.2. Those who question them (the questioning need not imply formal proceedings and may even refer not to criticism as such but simply to seeking information) will themselves have to render account about their conduct.

In this context it is perhaps possible to interpret the difficult 4.6 in two ways and we need not arrive at a definite conclusion one way or another - both would seem to have points to commend them and both are open to objections. If, as seems likely in

view of the sense of νεκρούς in v.5, νεκροῖς does not mean "spiritually dead", then we may take it to mean that either the gospel was preached to Christians who have since died,¹ or that it was preached to all dead people both righteous and unrighteous.² In favour of the first, it may be argued that this would indeed be a comfort to the readers either in the sense that they should never fear death since they are safe with God, or that because some Christians have died that is no reason to give up their calling in face of more tangible pursuits. Against it, one could say that "dead" is not the usual expression for Christians who have died but rather being "asleep", and also such an interpretation changes the meaning of "dead" in v.5 which refers to everyone. In favour of the second, the fact that the gospel is preached to all, even the unrighteous dead, emphasises the importance and decisiveness of it, and by association the importance of the judgment of God (v.5). Against it, one could argue that this would scarcely be comfort to suffering Christians to know that the gospel was preached to all so that the unrighteous were apparently receiving a second chance. On the other hand, however, such preaching is understood to have already taken place and would not therefore imply a second chance for the readers' critics, and such a universal evangelism serves to bring out the importance in the present (v.5) of obedience to the gospel. Moreover, it is not said what the outcome of that evangelisation had been. But, keeping in mind the writer's purpose as a

1 Selwyn First Epistle of St. Peter p.337ff; Kelly Epistles of Peter and Jude p.172ff; W.J. Dalton Christ's Proclamation p.42ff for discussion.

2 See E. Best 1 Peter p.155ff.

whole and recalling his description of the readers as obedient righteous ones, one is perhaps inclined to adopt the former interpretation; so indeed one finds a very similar idea in Wisdom 3.2ff -

"In the eyes of fools they seemed to die;
And their departure was accounted (to be their) hurt,
And their going from us (to be their) ruin:
But they are in peace.
For though in the sight of men they be punished,
Their hope is full of immortality;"¹

The context then in the light of v.4 would be that the righteous man is vindicated by God even in the face of death, which to the critic would seem conclusive of the ineffectualness of his faith. The contrast then between κατὰ ἀνθρώπους and κατὰ θεόν would, therefore, contain something of the content of the contrast between the vain traditions (1.18, 4.2ff) and the gospel as tradition, and hence reflect the immediate difficulties of the readers.

In keeping with this emphasis of the gospel of Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories as God's vindication of his elect, the writer, both at 4.17ff and 2.7ff, points out the perils of not believing the gospel. He casts such unbelief in a deterministic framework, no doubt in keeping with his purpose of consolation in which such opposition is seen to be inevitable, 2.8 εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτέθησαν . The element of predestination is perhaps increased if we read the plural rather than R. Harris' conjecture of ἐτέθη ² and also take it to refer to the whole rather than just to stumbling. To what extent this is a "praedestinatio in malam partem" is hard to say; one finds similar ideas elsewhere in the New Testament, e.g. 1 Thess. 5.9, Rom. 8.28, Jude 4. In 1 Peter presumably it serves

1 Transl. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha ed. R.H. Charles, I. p.539.

2 Nestle text, apparatus criticus ad loc.

very much a consolatory purpose¹ in view of the general context, as an answer in retrospect to why the gospel is rejected. It is certainly not in the rigid frame of Qumran thought, 1QS. 2.5ff, 3.26ff, and would seem to leave the matter open a) from the point of view of their opponents, e.g. 3.1 and perhaps 2.12, and b) from the point of view of the readers, e.g. the milk (2.2) is not a divine drug, baptism (3.21) is not an automatic guarantee of salvation, and the danger of apostasy is always there; judgment (4.17) whatever else affects the church as well.²

At this point, however, concerning the relation of the readers' conduct to their calling and to its effect upon their critics, we pass to the other emphasis used by the writer in his description of the gospel as Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories. Before doing so, we may summarise the conclusions of this section.

When we compare 1.11 with 4.13 in the context of the child image and the milk nourishment of the gospel (2.2), we observe that the writer regards the readers as God's suffering righteous ones, the suffering which they presently face being the onset of the Messianic Woes. Consequently 4.13 is not fellowship in Christ's sufferings in the hope of sharing in his exaltation, but rather the gospel of Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories, behind which also lies the description of Christ as the Righteous One, points to the fact that God vindicates the suffering elect. Suffering is here taken for granted and the emphasis falls on the vindication of

1 Danker "A Consolatory Pericope" p.96, cf. above p.54ff.

2 See C.F.D. Moule "The Judgement Theme in the Sacraments" in The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology Essays in honour of C.H. Dodd, ed. W.D. Davies and D. Daube, Cambridge 1956, pp.464-481.

those who suffer - God will vindicate those who suffer for the gospel's sake, the gospel itself being proof of it. In the comparison with 2.4ff this is further borne out, the writer continuing through the image of the building and in his epithets descriptive of Israel now applied to the readers, his understanding of the gospel contained in the child-growth image. As a consolation they are asked to recall that the gospel of Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories means the vindication by God of his elect, which elect they are as God's suffering righteous ones. From his use of the "stone" quotations, the gospel thus understood means that Christ, though rejected by men, was yet chosen by God; under the influence of the actual situation confronting him, suffering as rejection by men is the point of contact with the readers, the consolation and import of the gospel message here being God's vindication of his chosen ones. Through the writer's linking of ἀπειγένηται to the readers as ἐρέει, this element of consolation in the gospel of the suffering and glorified Christ is declared to be inherent in the readers' very existence as Christians and is part of the content of the milk on which they are nourished.

2) The gospel as obligation

In addition to consolation, the gospel also, as that which they have received, acts as an obligation; it provides not only for patient endurance in the expectation of the End, but for positive action in the present circumstances facing them. We must now ask, therefore, how the readers as God's holy people who are obedient to the truth (1.22) are related in this way to the gospel understood as Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories. We have noted that

by linking the description of the readers as Israel who possess the truth with regeneration (through the gospel), the writer seeks to apply the description of Christ as the suffering and glorified one very closely to their situation. So if they remain obedient to the gospel God will vindicate them, since the gospel in which they believe is itself the ground and proof of that. In this emphasis the stress lies mainly on vindication, with suffering as but the brief prelude to glory (5.10) ὁ λῖγον (cf. 1.6); and this suffering is understood primarily as rejection by men, since the Parousia will prove God's cause right and will reverse the current roles. When we turn to the gospel as obligation, however, there is a slight shift of emphasis on to the sufferings themselves, in that this Christ who was exalted and whom the readers confess as Lord (3.15) was the one who yet endured suffering.

In holding up to the readers this description of the exalted Christ as the one who yet suffered, and by implying through obedience to this gospel that they too must follow in this way (2.21b, 4.1), the writer follows a theme widely found in a variety of ways in the New Testament, and one which we have already had occasion to notice at several points in looking at the image of the child. However, he makes his own particular mark on this large theme by stressing the sinlessness of Christ's sufferings. Beyond saying simply that the gospel means that there is no glory without suffering, in effect that the readers who are already suffering must simply suffer, the point of Christ's sufferings is that they are sinless, that it was a God's Righteous One that he endured and was exalted. In this, we again detect the influence

of the actual situation upon the writer's interpretation of the gospel, that circumstances have dictated the understanding of the gospel in the tradition process. Since the readers are already facing difficulties and are suffering, the writer begins from that point and declares the gospel to mean suffering as a result of righteous obedience. Suffering for its own sake would seem to be of doubtful value either as consolation or exhortation, and the writer's search for an answer from the gospel to the problem of suffering brought about indirectly from the influence of the gospel itself leads him to an understanding influenced by the actual situation. If obedience to the gospel means participation in the way Christ himself followed, for the writer, in view of the readers' situation, this is to be understood with reference to suffering without sin.

The writer then brings the concept of the Righteous One to the fore in dealing with how the readers are related to Christ in suffering. Thus, while the sufferings of Christ (1.11) undoubtedly mean his death on the Cross, yet it is the fact that his death is the death of the Righteous One which is important. For the writer, therefore, there is more here than the simple "thatness", the "dass" of the Cross, and what he has to say does not lend itself to the thorough-going existentialist interpretation advocated especially by the Bultmann school.¹ Within his stress on the sufferings of Jesus rather than on his death as such, there lies the claim that these sufferings were the expression of a life of sinlessness. Thus for the writer the readers, as the righteous

1 See H. Anderson Jesus and Christian Origins p.276; and above p. 21.

ones (4.18) are matched by Christ as the Righteous One (3.18) and so it is the sufferings of the Righteous One whom God exalted which also is contained in the description of the gospel (1.11) as a further point of contact between the readers and Christ.

We may further note the importance of this for the writer in his understanding of the relation between Christ's death and Christ's sufferings as part of the outworking of this theme of the suffering and glorified One. At 1.22 the readers' conduct as a holy people is derived from obedience to the truth, the gospel, in contrast to the "vain traditions" (1.18) which sums up the heritage of their former life; such obedience as a holy people is linked, we recall, to the idea of regeneration through the word, gospel. Here, it is very much a matter of conduct within the church and between Christians rather than between the church and the world, between Christians and non-Christians. Consequently, the stress is on Christ's death as atonement as the content of the "sufferings" of 1.11; thus Christ's sufferings as part of the gospel are seen in terms of Christ's sacrifice (1.19) which has put an end to all sin. It is more particularly when the writer comes to deal with the relation between the readers and the world that Christ's sufferings take on this double meaning of death/faithful righteous endurance. So it is in this context particularly that he makes use of the idea of imitation, though not, of course, at the cost of the decisiveness of Christ as if he were but the first in a series; the writer prefaces any call for imitation with a reference to the uniqueness of Christ (2.21a, 3.18, which is recalled at 4.1a.) As a broad summary of the writer's view, we may

say that the readers are God's righteous ones only because of Christ's death as the Righteous One (3.18 cf. 1.2). This vicarious nature of Christ's "sufferings" extends both to conduct within the church and also to the conduct of the church in the world. In the latter case, however, in the context of the readers' suffering in the world, the writer adds this further idea of Christ as an example, so that those who worship him as Lord must follow him in lowliness and righteous obedience. It is just at the point of their involvement in the world that they must share the same fate. This confirms what the writer seems to be saying through the idea of regeneration, that the understanding of the gospel, in obedience to which they are God's chosen and righteous people, informs the very nature of their lives as Christians.¹ We may now examine this further in relation to two passages, 3.18ff and 2.18ff.

We have already seen how concerned the writer is with the gospel and the readers' adherence to it, and have maintained that it is into this context that we must fit the references made to baptism. Consequently a partial solution to the difficult passage in which baptism is mentioned explicitly (3.18-22) may be found in the fact that the spirits to whom Christ preached are also described as disobedient (3.20). Moreover, this disobedience on their part contrasts with the "pledge to maintain a clear conscience" (following B. Reicke's translation and interpretation of *ἐπερότημα* ²) on

1 So W. Brandt aptly remarks "Wandel als Zeugnis nach dem 1 Petrusbrief" Verbum Dei manet in Aeternum Festschrift O. Schmitz Witten 1953, 10-25, esp. p.25 "Sie sind wiedergeboren durch das 'lebendige und bleibende Wort Gottes' 1.23 --- Der Wandel der Christen ist der Kommentar zu diesem Wort."

2 The Disobedient Spirits p.182ff. It does not matter here whether it is "a pledge proceeding from ---" or "a pledge to maintain ---".

the part of the Christian, which for the writer is the meaning here of baptism. It is not, of course, possible to go again into the details of this very difficult and complex passage but only to deal with points which affect our discussion here.

As to the identity of the spirits, they are perhaps best understood as supernatural beings rather than as people who have died, especially if, as seems likely, Christ's journey in the spirit is not a reference to a time of pre-existence and hence a reference to the generation of Noah's day. As background to the ideas in the passage we may note especially 1 Enoch and Enoch's encounter with angels who had sinned and had produced giants through illicit relationships - Gen. 5.21-24, 6.1-4 cf. Jubilees 5, Test. Naphtali 3.5, CD. 2.18-20. In Apocalyptic thought, the Genesis 6 story was linked to that of Noah and the Flood; also the story of Noah was closely linked to Judgment as an eschatological theme, and in Christian circles this was seen also as a type of baptism. We have to reckon with a complex background and with a mingling of themes which are combined in various ways according to a writer's need. For the writer of 1 Peter, the disobedience of these spirits is of some importance,¹ and we may note as well God's patient waiting, corresponding to the present brief time before the End, and the reference to the fewness of the number corresponding to the small number represented by the readers.² Thus, with regard to the spirits' disobedience we note a) the way in which ἀπειθήσαντες

1 See P. Lundberg La Typologie Baptismale dans l'Ancienne Eglise Leipzig 1942, pp.98-116.

2 It seems doubtful if the "ogdoad" idea is developed here, but see J. Daniélou "The Flood, Baptism and Judgement in Holy Scripture" in From Shadows to Reality London 1960, pp.69-84.

refers back qualifying πνεύμασιν (v.20) shows that it was not just to spirits generally that Christ preached but to those disobedient ones of Noah's day; b) these spirits were generally notorious as examples of disobedience par excellence (cf. 2 Peter 2.4, 1 Enoch 10-16, Baruch 56, Gen. Apoc. 2.1-16). To them and to their disobedience are traced the sins of men, and even though they are "locked up", they still exert control over them. Thus for the writer it is just to these disobedient spirits that Christ has made known his victory.

We may perhaps leave open a decision on what the nature of this proclamation was, whether it was one declaring salvation or condemnation; Dalton argues that the proclamation must be one of condemnation¹ since it would be of no comfort to the readers to know that the angels who control their critics were finally saved. Yet we are not told what the response to the preaching was, even if it was the offer of salvation, and such an understanding of the proclamation as one of salvation would be more in accord with the New Testament meaning of "preach". On the whole, however, the writer seems more concerned that this is the proclamation of the victorious Christ² (cf. 3.18 Christ's exaltation ζωοποιηθεὶς after his humiliation θανάτωθεὶς; cf. also 3.22). One is inclined on the whole to locate the preaching at the time of the Ascension,³ taking

1 Christ's Proclamation p.155ff.

2 See Best 1 Peter p.144.

3 See Dalton Christ's Proclamation p.177ff; Kelly Epistles of Peter and Jude p.155; Schweizer Lordship and Discipleship p.67; H. Schlier Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief pp.1-18 "Die Himmelfahrt des Erlösers".

the double $\kappa\omicron\pi\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ in parallelism, with vs.19-21 as an insertion but one which, contrary to Bultmann's view,¹ does not alter the sequence of events to a "descensus ad inferos". The sequence of events of the gospel at 1.11 of suffering and glory would also then be kept in mind here. Also, the location of the prison in which the spirits are held is variously defined in Apocalyptic thought as being above or underneath the earth (cf. Luke 10.17). The importance at any rate of the preaching of Christ in terms of the manifestation of his risen power will be obvious within the writer's purpose; concerned with adherence to the gospel over against its rejection and so the rejection of the readers by the world around, he maintains that Christ as part of his victory has made that victory known at the heart of opposition.

In contrast to this disobedience there stands the "pledge to maintain a clear conscience" on the part of the baptised Christian. The writer here, anticipating the typology of the later church, seems to have combined again two themes² if we recall that a) the Flood is often seen as a type of the final Judgment (Is. 24.1, 18, 54.8-9, Matt. 24.37ff, 2 Peter 3.3ff, Apocalypse of Noah contained in 1 Enoch³), and b) the Flood is linked to baptism by the writer, a feature which appears subsequently in developed form in patristic thought (cf. Tertullian De Bapt. viii. 4); we take the awkward v.21a to refer to the whole event surrounding Noah and the Flood rather

1 "Bekenntnis und Liedfragmente im 1 Petrusbrief" p.5ff.

2 See P. Lundberg La Typologie Baptismale dans l'Ancienne Église pp.73-98; Daniélou "The Flood, Baptism and Judgement" p.85ff, esp. p.94ff.

3 See Charles Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha II, p.163ff.

than to water alone. Also this understanding of baptism seems preferable to the view of R.E. Nixon,¹ who attempts to find here a reference to the Christian's baptism in suffering (cf. Mk. 10.38, Luke 12.49). He rightly notes the importance of suffering in the letter and the fact that the readers participate in Christ's rejection. However, it does not seem to do sufficient justice to the conduct of the Christian, an important feature of the letter, as part of the baptismal life in obedience to the gospel. Moreover, it is difficult, as Nixon himself admits,² to know how we are then to understand the negative description of baptism *ὅτι σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου* - "that the mere fact of physical suffering will not be a way of salvation" seems an unlikely translation. (This negative counterpart to baptism (cf. Heb. 10.22) we prefer to understand as polemic against pagan lustration rites over against 1) Selwyn's and also Nixon's view that baptism is more than bodily washing since there is a decisiveness in the *ὅτι* in contrast to *ἀλλά* ; or 2) Dalton's idea that it refers to circumcision, since the absence of any Jewish controversy would seem to make this unlikely.³ Reicke's view,⁴ however, that the writer here attacks an over-emphasis on ceremonial purification because it leads to isolationism from the world would seem to read too much into what is said.) It may be, in fact, that the combination of these two ideas, of the Flood both as a type of Judgment and baptism, accounts partly for the awkwardness

1 "Baptism in 1 Peter 3.21" T.u.U. 102, Stud. Evang. 4, 437-41.

2 "Baptism in 1 Peter 3.21" p.439.

3 Christ's Proclamation p.215ff. See J. Dunn Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.219.

4 The Disobedient Spirits p.187ff.

of v.21.

The writer's thought, as we have seen, is very much set in a cosmic, apocalyptic framework. Baptism saves them from condemnation in the Judgment, now already beginning with them in their suffering as the righteous ones (4.17), because they are united with the victorious Christ (v.21 δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ cf. 1,3) who has made that victory known to the disobedient spirits. But this baptism is also a pledge of a clear conscience (cf. Heb. 13.18) so that the one whom they reverence as Lord (3.15), the exalted Christ (3.22 cf. 1.11 τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας), is the one who suffered without sin. Consequently, it is faithful endurance and blameless conduct which must characterise their lives in allegiance to him. Thus, considering his description of baptism as the pledge of a clear conscience, it would seem that his understanding of baptism is derived from his understanding of the gospel, what it should mean for the readers in their obedience to it. So also ἡγωνιζόμενος at 1.22, if it contains an echo of the moment of baptism, as a perfect participle indicating a continuing effect, is interpreted by regeneration through the word. So also at 2.1ff the connection between ἀποθέμενοι — and ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη is not based on baptism as such (cf. the negative counterpart at 3.21 οὐκ ἀπόθεσις), but upon an understanding of the gospel and of the Lord received in it, the one who as the exalted Lord endured without sinning; as often in 1 Peter, the indicative follows the imperative so that v.3 εἰ ἐγείρασθε gives the ground for v.1 ἀποθέμενοι .

In this regard, it is interesting to recall that the other two

references to *συνείδησις* at 2.19 and 3.16 (3.21 no doubt recalls 3.16) are both in a context of sinless suffering, and it is not surprising that this also appears in 4.1 immediately following. The readers, as God's righteous ones, suffer with a clear conscience, maintaining a good conduct (3.16). But this suffering *οὐκ ἀδίκαιον* is based on the fact that Christ as the Righteous One suffered for them¹ and only in him have they been brought near to God and are his righteous ones. Thus 3.18 *δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων* as well as referring to *περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν* refers also to v.14 and to the readers suffering as righteous ones. The readers in obedience to the gospel, in worshipping Christ as Lord and already sharing in the eager expectancy of glory, so much so that it transfigures their sufferings (1.3ff²), yet must share in Christ's way in suffering blamelessly. The thought of the readers as God's holy people, the command of Lev. 19.2 (cf. 1.16), is based for the writer on the fact that through their relationship to Christ in the gospel they must suffer sinlessly in the world (cf. 1.12³).

3.15 recalls 1.16 in an interesting way; in both it is a question of the conduct of God's holy people. 1.16 is fulfilled in 3.15 by reverencing Christ as Lord, but the readers do this precisely in suffering sinlessly, i.e. since the exalted Christ

1 If *ἀπέθανεν* is the correct reading, being "lectio difficilior", then it may be significant that the writer breaks here with his usual use of *πάθειν* of Christ, in order to emphasise Christ's uniqueness. He returns to *πάθειν* at 4.1.

2 See H. Anderson Jesus and Christian Origins pp.279-80.

3 We might suggest therefore that this provides the content for the writer of the "spiritual sacrifices" 2.5, the maintaining of a good conduct and example as Christians. See McKelvey New Temple p.128 At v.9 *ὅπως* --- is best taken with all the preceding epithets and is not restricted to the priesthood idea alone.

suffered as God's Righteous One, so also for those who worship him obedience in sinless suffering is the norm. Thus for those who have this hope within them (3.15) there is a direct connection between that confidence and blameless endurance. For the readers who worship Christ as Lord there is the knowledge that he has overcome the disobedient spirits who control their critics. But involved in this faith in the exalted Christ, indeed just because of it, is obedience in sinless suffering and the maintaining of good conduct. In keeping with the references to Christ's exaltation which we find in this passage (vs.15, 18, 22) is v.17; rather than this being a general maxim inserted as an independent reason along with v.18ff for the advice given in the previous vs.13-6, it also is eschatological in tone and conveys the meaning that in view of the coming Judgment it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.¹ This is quite within the writer's understanding of the gospel and in keeping with 4.17ff later on, where we find reference to the Judgment along with obedience to the gospel and the necessity of living a righteous life. Throughout, in the contrast between ἀγαθοποιεῖν and its opposites, there is a divine sanction at work as well as a human one;² thus 2.20 ἀμαρτάνοντες is "doing wrong" but also "sinning", the ἀναστροφή which issues in good works (2.12) is according to 3.16 ἀναστροφή ἐν Χριστῷ, cf. 4.15 where suffering as a Christian is contrasted with suffering for wrongdoing. The Christian's whole conduct, the focus of the

1 J.R. Michaels "Eschatology in 1 Peter 3.17" N.T.S. 13 (1967), 394-401.

2 See W.C. van Unnik "The Teaching of Good Works in 1 Peter" pp.92-110; W. Brandt "Wandel als Zeugnis" pp.10-25.

baptismal life, is in relation to the exalted Christ who, as God's Righteous One suffered blamelessly.¹ So also 3.16 and the connection between the readers' conscience, their conduct ἀναστροφή and their putting their opponents to shame, would seem to be taken up at 4.16 where as Christians they are not to be ashamed of their position in face of opposition (cf. Mark 8.38).

The writer renders the readers' obligation to the gospel in this way even more secure by bringing in the idea of Christ as an example to be copied, at 2.21ff and 4.1. The latter seems in thought very close to Phil. 2.5, but 1 Peter brings out more the exemplary nature of Christ here in stressing the readers' participation in the gospel. We have noted that this idea of an "imitation of Christ", understood in such a direct way, is not very frequent in the New Testament cf. Heb. 13.12-13, 1 John 3.16 where also the Christian's participation in the way of Christ is linked to an imitation of him.² Reicke, who especially has argued that one must understand 3.18-22 within its context and that it is not a digression on the part of the writer, detects the idea of Christ as an example at 3.18; for him, ὅτι καὶ means some comparison between Christ and the readers,³ and centres on περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν as "sin offering" (cf 2.21ff and Is. 53.10). This is taken to mean that as Christ was a sin offering so also are the readers required to be this - "the conclusion must be: thus we likewise must be

1 Michaels: "Eschatology in 1 Peter 3.17" aptly remarks p.400: "Thus his (i.e. Christ's) experience is the illustration and the prototype of that which awaits the Christian believer according to 3.14-17."

2 But as in 1 Peter Christ as an example is prefaced with a reference to his decisiveness.

3 The Disobedient Spirits p.211ff.

prepared if necessary to die as a sin offering for the sake of the pagans, namely to lead them also to God."¹ But to take this line one feels is to misunderstand the passage.

a) The imitation of Christ, Christ as an example does not occur until 4.1. If, as Reicke points out, there is a close similarity to 2.18ff, then 2.20 is parallel to 3.17, and then to v.21a the parallel is the whole of 3.18-22, with v.21b ἡμῶν ὑπολιμπάνων ---- parallel to 4.1.

b) If the reading ἀπέθανεν is correct, then the writer makes a clear distinction between Christ's death and the Christians' sufferings at this point, and returns only at 4.1 to his normal practice of using πάθειν .

One is also hesitant about Reicke's statement that² "here we have the most definite, the most energetic and at the same time the most optimistic mission views", since the writer seems to leave open-ended, as it were, the reaction of the world to the readers' conduct (2.12,³ 3.16 (most likely a reference not to the time of their conversion but to eschatological shame), 4.17). This kind of ambivalent attitude also seems preferable to finding a gradual development in the letter.⁴ In view of the closeness of the End, the writer seems to leave the matter open - the readers are not a

1 The Disobedient Spirits p.217.

2 The Disobedient Spirits p.132. On the Christian's conduct as mission in 1 Peter see generally W. Bieder "Grund und Kraft der Mission nach dem 1 Petrusbrief" Theologische Studien 29 Zurich 1950; also F. Hahn Mission in the New Testament London 1965, p.141ff.

3 Reading Nestle text, cf. 5.6 variant; see van Unnik "Teaching" p.103ff.

4 See Dalton Christ's Proclamation p.68, see above pp.57-58. cf. Michaels: "Eschatology in 1 Peter 3.17" p.396.

holy enclave who must reject the world, but neither do they seem completely optimistic about winning the world. Thus, as we have seen, 2.8 may not be a rigid "praedestinatio in malam partem" and also it is difficult to be precise about the content of the preaching to the spirits and also about their reaction to it - so even if the content is salvation, the response is left open, cf. 2.9, where ὅπως ---- would seem to mean both God's salvation and Judgment (cf. 3.15).

At 4.1 then the readers, obedient to the gospel of Christ's righteous sufferings, participate also in the way of their Lord so much that they may actually copy him. As they worship him as the exalted Obedient One and are themselves assured of participation in glory, so they must follow him in sinless endurance. 4.1 recalls 3.18 and also refers back to 3.21 and the reference there to baptism, in that ὁπλίσσασθε provides a counterpart to ἀπόθεσις (v.21) so that again "having a clear conscience" is interpreted with reference to suffering sinlessly.¹ To this difficult verse three main answers are given as to the relation here between Christ and the Christians. 4.1b itself may perhaps be some kind of proverbial maxim,² though there remains the problem of how it is to be understood.

a) Some scholars³ in light of 3.18ff argue for a baptismal

1 See Reicke The Disobedient Spirits pp.202-3.

2 E. Lohse "Paränese und Kerygma im 1 Petrusbrief" p.81; Märtyrer und Gottesknecht Göttingen 1955, p.195, cf. p.182ff. See also for general discussion of the passage A. Strobel "Macht Leiden vom Sünde frei?" T.Z. 19 (1963), 412-425; E. Sieffert "Die Heilsbedeutung des Leidens und Sterbens Christi" p.421ff.

3 Dalton Christ's Proclamation p.238ff; Kelly Epistles of Peter and Jude pp.168-9; cf. T.D.N.T. V "ἀδοξα" (Michaelis) p.921ff; Lohse Märtyrer und Gottesknecht p.195.

interpretation along the lines of Rom. 6.2ff. Thus "suffering in the flesh" means virtually "dying to the flesh". It is difficult, however, to understand suffering here as equivalent to baptismal dying. The writer, as we have seen, uses suffering in an ambiguous way with regard to Christ. It includes his death of course, but has a wider connotation which connects very closely with the readers' situation and their suffering, and since there is no hint elsewhere that they face death in martyrdom, or that he understands baptism as a dying,¹ one finds the idea here somewhat out of place and difficult.

b) A. Strobel² takes 4.1b to refer to Christ himself, with ὅτι as ground for the advice given in 4.1a, and regarding ὁ παθών as a strict singular. This is an ingenious solution and by it Strobel brings out the decisiveness of Christ by whose death and resurrection (cf. 1.11) sin has been overcome so that sinlessness is a possibility for the Christian.³ Yet this would seem to be already contained in 3.18, and a further reference to Christ in a context referring to Christians, καὶ ὑμεῖς ---, εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ---, would seem to be a little awkward. Also, it removes the play made

1 So even at 2.24 where the idea of dying/ceasing to sin is mentioned, it is not in a context of baptism but of Christ's death, and the idea which is uppermost in the writer's mind at this point, as we shall see, is that of blameless endurance on the part of the slaves.

2 "Macht Leiden vom Sünde frei?" p.412ff, esp. p.419ff.

3 As to how Christ may be said to be finished with sin, Strobel seeks to demonstrate that παύεσθαι need not imply active participation in that with which one is finished - "es ist also durchaus möglich, das πέκυνται ἀμαρτίας die Trennung von einem Verhältnis zur Sünde besagt, das nicht aktiver Art war", "Macht Leiden vom Sünde frei?" p.424.

by the writer on $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\epsilon\iota\nu$ with reference to Christ and the readers, if the maxim is made to refer wholly to Christ.

c) From a Jewish background and from the idea of suffering being able to atone for sins,¹ one might argue that the readers' sufferings render them sinless by atoning for them, or if the flesh is seen as the seat of sin, by a gradual purification through suffering (although the tenses $\kappa\alpha\theta\acute{\omega}\nu$, $\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ might make this latter difficult). This, however, is also open to objection. What, for instance, are we to make of Christ's sufferings? They cannot purify him from sin since for the writer he is sinless in his obedience, unless we take $\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\iota$ in a passive rather than a middle sense as "freed from the power of sin". Moreover, for the writer, sufferings elsewhere are seen as trials and not as a means of expiation - they prove and test faith (1.7) in contrast e.g. to Macc. 6.12ff, where the Jewish martyrs praise God because suffering gives them an opportunity to atone for their sins.

We may, however, attempt a solution from the direction we have been following, namely the relationship through the gospel of the readers as righteous ones to Christ as the Righteous One. 4.1a, as we have said, recalls 3.18 and Christ's atoning death; only now the writer reverts to his preferred description of Christ as suffering in order to give him a close point of contact with the readers, who as righteous ones are liable to experience suffering in obedience to the gospel (3.13, 17, 4.2ff). And since Christ suffered as the Righteous One, they too are to arm themselves with that thought so

1 See Lohse Märtyrer und Gottesknecht p.29ff; "Paränese und Kerygma" p.82; Davies Paul and Rabbinic Judaism p.263; Schweizer Lordship and Discipleship p.25ff.

as to live blameless lives. (This is to take τὴν αὐτὴν ἐννοίαν as referring backwards, with v.1a and v.2 close together). How then are we to understand 4.1b? Recalling the fact that for the writer worthy suffering stems from obedience to the gospel and serves to prove faith rather than to rid the soul of sin, we would suggest that the relation between suffering and sin at 4.1b is not that suffering has rid one of sin but that suffering is proof of sinlessness (cf. 2.24 ἀπογενόμενοι , 3.14 πάσχετε διὰ δικαιοσύνην).¹ Thus suffering is not the means to righteousness but the demonstration of it. So H. Windisch remarks that "wie Christus in seiner Passion als der Gerechte sich erwies, so tritt auch in dem Leiden der Christen ihre Sündlosigkeit zutage, die sie gewonnen haben. Wie Christus leidet er, weil er keine Sünde hat; er leidet - hier fällt der Vergleich hinweg -, weil er die Sünde abgeworfen hat".²

Thus a) we should understand παθών (v.1b) in the same way as παθόντος (v.1a) i.e. suffering which is the result of righteous obedience; b) it would be more natural, admittedly, to find the present πάσχον rather than the aorist παθών. However, the writer has a tendency to use the aorist in preference to the present,³ and this may account for the aorist here. On the other hand, if it does suggest some definite point in time, we might suggest that he has in mind the circumstances of the readers generally and some

1 See Sieffert "Die Heilsbedeutung des Leidens und Sterbens Christi" p.426.

2 Taufe und Sünde im Ältesten Christentum bis auf Origenes Tübingen 1908, p.230; see that chapter generally "Der entsündigte Christ im 1 Petrusbriefe" pp.226-43, cf. Knopf Die Briefe Petri und Judä p.161.

3 See Best 1 Peter p.26, p.152

actual occasions of sufferings (cf. 1.6, 2.12, 4.4).

The writer has, of course, safeguarded himself from any over-enthusiastic view that all suffering is therefore to be welcomed and even positively encouraged, by maintaining that only sinless suffering is worth anything. As God's holy people, begotten through the gospel, righteous obedience is the pattern of the Christian life (cf. 1 John 3.6, 5.18ff). Accordingly, in leading a righteous life, if suffering should come upon them (3.14, 4.2ff) then that is confirmation of their sinlessness (4.1). In so doing, in thus being obedient to the gospel, they participate in Christ's sufferings in following him in blameless endurance.

Such a view as we have seen is close to that put forward by H. Windisch¹ who maintains that the Christians' sufferings stem from their having done with sin rather than effecting atonement for sin. However, to what extent the writer regarded the readers as being actually sinless is difficult to say, and rather than follow Windisch who argues that the writer presupposes their sinlessness to a great extent, the frequent exhortations to blameless conduct suggest that the temptation to wrongdoing may have been real enough. Windisch, to support his view, has to maintain that 4.8 refers to "former sins", but this is difficult.² The list of sins at 4.15 seems at first sight astonishing, as if a Christian for example would be capable of murder. Perhaps with E. Best³ we should not

1 Taufe und Sünde im Ältesten Christentum bis auf Origenes p.226ff.

2 For full discussion of Windisch' argument see Spörri Der Gemeindegedanke im 1 Petrusbrief Gutersloh 1925, p.169ff. 4.8 refers to the internal life of the community cf. 1.22 - perhaps the best view is the forgiveness of "the one who is loved" rather than "the one who loves"; cf. Best 1 Peter p.159.

3 1 Peter p.164.

quickly decide what might obtain in those days by our own standards, but a more suitable suggestion might be that the writer is simply taking strong examples to emphasise his point about suffering for righteousness' sake.¹ In view of the apparent nearness of the End, 4.2 τὸν ἐπίλοιπον --- χρόνον would seem to refer more to the remaining time before the End than to the rest of one's life, and so the readers must maintain a blameless witness and suffer sinlessly (cf. 3.17).

One encounters similar ideas in the other "imitation of Christ" passage at 2.18ff. Here also the eschatological tone is present (2.23), where God is described as the Just Judge (cf. 4.5) and the slaves in doing good win God's favour (2.19, 20b, cf. 1.13), anticipating the glory which is to come. So 2.20 is also eschatological in outlook as well as 3.17. For the slaves, as for the readers generally, the acknowledgement of Christ as Lord means following him in sinless obedience. As God's righteousness vindicated Christ who endured blamelessly, participation in the gospel means the same for them (2.23). So also if we may compare ἐκλήθητε v.21 with 3.9, and the way in which their inheritance as a holy people is bound up with sinlessness after the manner of Christ's example, v.23 (cf. 3.9), then they share in Christ's exaltation (cf. 1.3) by participating also in his humiliation.

It is perhaps significant that the writer in this "Haustafel" section dwells particularly on the duties of slaves, almost as if their situation gave an opportunity to express much of what he was saying to the readers generally; they especially might be

1 Kelly Epistles of Peter and Jude p.188.

open to abuse, and consequently they especially might find suitable occasion to put into practice the gospel's declaration of blameless endurance as seen in Christ. Whether or not the image of the child was still at the front of the writer's mind, it is nevertheless interesting to note in the light of 2.2 his use of ὑπογραμμὸν with reference to Christ as an example, ὑπογραμμὸν having then to be interpreted in terms of following in his footsteps. The word seems still to have about it something of the school/learning atmosphere,¹ its root meaning being the outline tracing of letters for children to learn through copying. At any rate such learning here agrees wholly with the content of the babes' education expressed in the term milk, so that they learn the exalted Christ whom God vindicated as the one who had been righteous and obedient. So the assimilation of what the readers learn should find expression in their lives, epitomised for the writer particularly in the situation of those who are slaves.

Here again there is the contrast between doing right and doing wrong in the eyes of men and of God. If, as seems probable, "doing good" and "maintaining a good conduct" are in the best tradition of the classical gentleman,² the καλὸς καγαθός, nevertheless the reason for such conduct rests for the writer on a spiritual level; so if the readers' obedience to the gospel finds expression in ἀναστροφῇ, it is based ultimately not so much on the heathen's approval or disapproval but on God's.³ Consequently, to the

1 See Kelly Epistles of Peter and Jude p.120; W. Bauer A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament 13th Impress. Chicago 1971, translated and edited by W. Arndt and F. Gingrich, p.851.

2 Van Unnik "Teaching of Good Works" p.108.

3 See Brandt "Wandel als Zeugnis" p.17.

slaves' conduct he applies Christ as an example to be followed.

The picture of Christ here is drawn from Is. 53, and as with other uses of the Servant image in the New Testament, the emphasis falls very much on Christ's patient endurance with reference to the background of the lowly and exalted Righteous One¹ (cf. Acts 8.32ff where, as part of a Passion apologetic, it supports the necessity of Christ's sufferings rather than those sufferings as having a propitiatory meaning). 2.24ff, however, does introduce the idea of propitiation, and although this only recalls v.21 $\epsilon\kappa\alpha\theta\epsilon\nu\ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\ \upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$ and may have been included through the citing of a hymn or traditional fragment (cf. 3.18),² it shows that the application of the Servant passage to Jesus has real meaning for the writer, as opposed to its being a proof-text simply of the necessity for his death. Thus, though arising out of the context of advice to slaves, the writer is led on from Jesus as an example of patient endurance to his role as Saviour - as the Righteous One of God he is not an example simply of blameless endurance, but one who, as Saviour, has made possible and who demands that blameless endurance from his followers. This decisiveness of Christ is continued at v.25. Consequently, to return to Christ as Bishop is to follow his example as that divine forgiveness is worked out in life's experiences, cf. 1.16ff where the readers' former life is contrasted with their

1 Schweizer Lordship and Discipleship p.49ff; Lindars Apologetic p.134ff; see also M.D. Hooker Jesus and the Servant London 1959, p.124ff.

2 See Boismard Quatre Hymnes Baptismales p.111ff; Bultmann "Bekenntnis- und Liedfragmente" p.1ff. One notes the change at v.24 to first person plural and back again to second person at v.24b, showing the writer's concern to adapt a hymnic source to the hortatory purpose - see Lohse "Paränese und Kerygma" p.87ff.

present one, being characterised by obedience to the lowly and exalted Christ. (Since it would seem that any suffering righteous one was called Servant,¹ then this as a description of Christ may have attracted specifically Servant passages as a further description. At 2.24 such a Servant Christology may have reached its logical conclusion in emphasising Christ's uniqueness and his suffering as propitiation. Certainly 1 Peter 2.24ff is the most explicit passage in the New Testament in working out the Christological significance of the Servant in relation to Jesus).

It is interesting also to note that the writer has himself altered the LXX quotation, by putting ἁμαρτίαν for ἄνομίαν, thus linking v.24 with v.20 and the actual situation of the slaves, and stressing Christ's sinless endurance. Thus the slaves in face of harsh treatment maintain their allegiance to the gospel by copying Christ's example; they too must share in the sinless obedience of the Righteous One. Brandt at 2.20 argues² that the two sets of participles ἁμαρτάνοντες - κολαφιζόμενοι and ἀγαθοποιοῦντες - πάσχοντες refer to the same moment and contrasts those who suffer unfairly and who are overcome with thoughts of revenge, and those who continue to love despite unfair treatment. This, however, in view of the contrast at 3.17 and 4.15 seems somewhat unlikely, and one prefers to follow the more usual contrast between two modes of conduct, with God and not the master being the true Judge.

The writer's use of ἐπακολουθήσητε recalls to mind the

1 Schweizer Lordship and Discipleship p.51.

2 "Wandel als Zeugnis" pp.19-20.

Synoptic theme of following Jesus and of how the disciples follow in sharing Christ's lowliness; especially one may recall to mind Matt. 16.24 cf. 11.29, ἄρατε τὸν σταυρόν , ἄρατε τὸν ζυγόν , so that the disciples as νῆπιοι, the privileged recipients of the truth about Jesus, follow their Lord in his humility. So also at 1 Peter 2.2 the βρέφη share the fate of the lowly and exalted Christ, and this is emphasised by the writer by his linking to it the idea of regeneration (through the gospel). However, before we return to 2.1ff and relate what has been said to the image of the babes, we may summarise the conclusions of this section on the gospel understood as an obligation.

The writer derives the nature of the readers' conduct from the gospel of Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories, as he did its consolation, on the basis that the Lord, to whom as God's righteous ones they are obedient, himself endured blamelessly as God's Righteous One. This understanding of the gospel and the declaration of the readers' regeneration through it, determines the writer's understanding of baptism itself and what form the baptismal life of the Christian should take. The writer makes especially clear the readers' obedience to the gospel in this way through the theme of imitating Christ (2.18ff and 4.1), just at the point of the church's involvement in the world. Here especially, too, the double nuance of Christ's sufferings both as atoning death and blameless endurance comes into play. If the gospel as consolation means that God vindicates the righteous, as obligation it means that it is the righteous whom God vindicates, and that as obedient to the exalted Christ, the readers can do no other than follow him in blameless

endurance. Consequently, while the idea of imitation is not explicitly mentioned at 4.12ff, in contrast to the other sections dealing with suffering (2.18ff and 3.13ff), yet the content of what it means to suffer as a Christian (4.14, 16) is to be found in following the Lord (cf. 3.15 reverencing Christ as Lord) in sinlessness and righteousness. This is emphasised when we link being a Christian (4.16) with the image of the child and being begotten through the gospel (2.2), i.e. the writer's understanding of the gospel informs the content of what the Christian life means, and the readers' understanding of what they have received finds expression in their life and conduct.

It is, of course, ultimately impossible to keep these themes of obligation and consolation apart, since the writer weaves them so closely together. They exist together just because for the writer faith and obedience are inseparable (1.9, 1.13-14, 2.6-7, 3.1ff, 4.17). Faith in the exalted Righteous One means obedience to him in righteousness, the faith which discerns his cosmic Lordship is made real in lowly obedience; and it is only those who follow him in this way who may know the secret of his victory and may find their trials already being transformed by his glory.

Having now examined how the writer develops his understanding of the gospel 1.11, both as consolation and exhortation for the readers, we may now return to the image of the child at 2.1ff and relate our findings to this passage as a perspective on tradition. Setting 1 Peter's use of the child image in its broad context in

the New Testament, it is obvious that we have thought it to be closer to what we find at Matt. 11.25ff than to Paul or Hebrews. This seems to go against a modern trend in scholarship which tends to take 1 Peter, Paul and Hebrews together, but our contrary conclusion is here confirmed if one re-assesses the role of baptism-initiation in the letter. The case for a closer similarity with Matt. 11.25 is strengthened by noticing the way *νήπιος* is used there in consolatory fashion, with the knowledge of the secret of Christ's person as a special understanding which contrasts with a spurious knowledge; this knowledge revealed by God is linked at 16.13ff to the building image (cf. 1 Peter 2.4ff). This understanding of Christ is very much that of the lowly and exalted One, and to the confession of him is attached the pattern of discipleship, so that sharing Christ's yoke is sharing Christ's Cross. We may note in distinction from 1 Peter that Matthew, for his part, seems to separate suffering as a participation in the Messianic Woes, Chap. 24, from daily suffering in the world as part of the church's discipleship (5.11);¹ 1 Peter, in light of his urgent eschatological outlook, sees the Christian's suffering in the present as the onset of the End (4.17).

1 Peter 2.1ff, therefore, as a perspective on tradition, is concerned not so much with a context of baptism as with an understanding of the gospel and of Christ himself which determines the purpose and nature of the (baptismal) Christian life. The image of the child stands against the background of a "crisis of tradition" so to speak and is to be viewed in this context. This context

1 See Hare Theme of Jewish Persecutions of Christians p.99ff, p.163ff.

applies, for the writer, both to the readers and to their critics; the critics speak out of that setting of tradition which informs their lives (1.18, 4.3ff), and in so far as the church in their midst has foregone such ways as they still follow, it causes a crisis for them since the tradition which directs their life is now being called in question. Also for the readers that new tradition of the gospel which they have received and entered into, so that now it controls their life just as did their ancestral traditions their old life, is called in question through opposition to it. More acutely for them, the gospel which they thus received is the very cause of the trouble in which they are placed, and the question as a matter of urgency is whether indeed the gospel as tradition has the ability to come to terms with the present. Can the lessons which the readers as "babes" have learned answer their present need? From our study of the letter it is clear that the writer believes that this is so, that such learning is applicable, that the gospel as tradition does have the ability to come to grips with the present. As tradition it provides a context and perspective by which to cope with the present, a "conservation" 1.5 φρουρουμένων, 5.8, which contrasts with the "conservatism" of the critics from the standpoint of their tradition 4.4 ἐνίσχονται. Thus the kind of stability afforded by each tradition by which to assess and to deal with new-found circumstances is appropriately different. The crisis of identity thrust up is, from our study of the letter, a real one - for the critics, their identity with their heritage is being questioned by the presence of the Christians who have opted for a different way of life; and for the readers, their identity is also

questioned by opposition. The writer's frequent appeals to have done with former ways hint at what may have been a strong temptation on the readers' part to revert to that traditional life. In this struggle as it were for true identity, the writer encourages his readers to maintain their allegiance to the gospel which they they received, declaring it to be true ancestral tradition (1.17 contrast *παράλας* 1.18 cf. 2.2 *εἰς αὐτησίαν*).

In his belief that the gospel as tradition has this resilient quality of being able to come to grips with the present, the writer interprets it in terms of Christ's sufferings and subsequent glories (1.11). We have, however, to take account here not only of the gospel as tradition but of the writer's adopting a traditional understanding of the gospel, so that the child image at 2.2, as a Biblical perspective on tradition, reflects tradition not only as the gospel but tradition as traditional understanding of that gospel. His description of the gospel, his understanding of Christ, is not something altogether new but is found, as we have seen, at other points in the New Testament. This brings us back here to our initial assessment of the writer as one who is not as such an original thinker¹ as Paul or the writer to the Hebrews might be held to be, but who owes a great deal to traditional themes and ideas. He is nevertheless no mere traditionalist and his genius lies in the way in which he combines and weaves together different strands, e.g. the stone imagery as applied to both community and Christ, the Flood as type both of baptism and Judgment, and more particularly his understanding both of Christ and the community as God's suffering righteous ones.

¹See above p.33.

The inextricable interrelationship of Christ as the obedient Righteous One and the readers as obedient righteous ones is decisive for the understanding of the letter and of how the writer comes to grips with the readers' difficulties. We have seen how he works this out in terms of the consolation and exhortation which the gospel, thus understood, brings. He strengthens the connection through the idea of regeneration (through the word). The βρέφη who know the secret of Christ as the lowly and exalted Righteous One and who feed on him, γάλα, are ἀρτιγέννητα through that same gospel. He then goes on to develop this through the imagery of the stone, but still within the context of faith and obedience to the gospel.

The various strands in the theme of righteous obedience are so intricately interwoven by the author that it is exceedingly difficult to say whether his understanding of the gospel (1.11) controls his understanding of the situation or vice versa. We have attempted to show in our study that the writer, being no mere traditionalist, does take seriously the contemporary situation, so that it controls in some way his assessment of the gospel as tradition. Thus the existentialist "now" causes him to be aware critically of the tradition. On the other hand, he does believe that what the readers have inherited and what he himself is imparting does have something to say to the present; indeed, if we are correct in the claim that the situation has arisen in some way out of the readers' acceptance of the gospel (2.7-8 cf. 1.12), then the present, the "now", can only be understood in relation to tradition, both on the part of the readers and of their opponents

(1.18, 4.3). The writer, therefore, in dealing with his readers' need and in interpreting the tradition and applying it to the present, claims continuity both with the gospel which they first received and with those who imparted it to them (1.11-12); also he claims continuity with their own past experience of the gospel and what it has meant to them (2.3 *εἰ ἐγεύσασθε*). Thus a) from the writer's point of view what he interprets to them is in keeping with what they already know, and b) from their point of view as *ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη* , what they are asked to learn and understand is strengthened and corroborated in some way by their own experience. So this understanding of their past makes the present more important and crucial than ever, as well as providing the context simply for its occasion.

The situation therefore determines the writer's interpretation of the tradition and yet also the tradition helps him and the readers to understand the situation. We may summarise this interaction in this way. Through the identification of the church and Israel, the readers, in the present circumstances of trial and suffering, are seen as God's righteous and obedient people. The letter begins on this note (1.1ff), and at 2.4-5, in the knowledge of the truth, they are described as a building/Temple through obedience to the gospel (cf. 1.5 *φρουρουμένων* 5.10 *θεμελιώσει*). This understanding influences his interpretation of the gospel (1.11) of Christ as God's Righteous One, in terms of its direct relevance for them, noting for example the connecting of the stone imagery as applied to the community to the stone testimonia as applied to Christ. And this interpretation of the gospel is then in turn

applied back to the situation by him, viewing it in light of the gospel thus understood.

Thus from the gospel are derived consolation and exhortation, serving to demonstrate on the one hand that God exalts the righteous even though they are rejected by men, and on the other hand that it is the righteous whom God exalts. We should note that in this interaction, the writer derives these points not so much from the readers as God's righteous ones in themselves as from the gospel to which they are obedient as it is applied to them in their need. The gospel, therefore, answers the readers' problem of suffering. If we might venture to paraphrase, it is as if they were asking why they should be suffering, they who have been obedient to the gospel and who were living a good and upright life; in view of the returns, so to speak, is the investment worth it (cf. 1.7, 1.18)? Beginning with the present situation, the "now" of suffering determines the understanding of the gospel; and since there is little merit in urging the readers to endure suffering for its own sake simply, i.e. answering the question out of itself, the gospel's meaning points both to suffering as but the prelude to glory and to the fact that it stems from righteous obedience. In both cases the "now" of actual suffering is taken as the starting point and is in turn put in context in light of the tradition.

The readers, therefore, as ἀπειθήννητα βρέφη, and the writer too are involved very much in a learning process in grappling with the problem of tradition which is here thrust up. Neither is what they have inherited from the past as tradition discarded, nor yet is there removed from them the necessity of questioning it and

of finding its relevance for the present. There is this tension between continuity and contemporaneity which lies, as we have already suggested, at the heart of tradition. The writer as interpreter and themselves as learning agents have to "span the situation",¹ having to carry over and apply what is already known to a new set of circumstances. In the case of the writer, he combines much that is traditional in a fresh and interesting way. He is not imprisoned by tradition but is creative in his use of it. If we may put it in this way, he has an eye to tradition not simply as a known deposit, something fixed and rigid, but to the dimension of intentionality² in the tradition process. Accordingly he exhibits a freedom in his use of tradition and of what is traditional in dealing with the present situation. While claiming continuity, as we have seen, both with those who proclaimed the gospel to the readers and with the readers' own understanding of it hitherto, he strives for fresh understanding, and thus himself seeks to "span the situation" in this way.

The readers, also, are required to carry over their experience of the gospel into the situation in which they find themselves in the present - in terms of our passage, it is "the longing for the Christ-milk" in relation to the "having tasted". In themselves having to "span the situation", facing the question of the relevance of what has been received for the present time, they too must come to grips with tradition not as a fixed deposit simply but in terms of its intentionality. They are summoned to engage with the writer

1 See D. Schön Beyond the Stable State p.234ff. See above p.30ff.

2 See Galloway Faith in a Changing Culture p.57ff. See above p.29ff.

in the need to reach fresh understanding, and in carrying over what they already know, to rediscover its truth in new ways. This task is given existential urgency both at 1.10ff and at 2.2 (cf. his frequent use of "now" generally in the context of his hortatory purpose); at 1.10ff the understanding of the gospel as "the sufferings and subsequent glories of Christ" which the prophets point to and which is worthy even for angels to know, has been imparted to them (noting the stress on ὑμᾶς , ὑμῖν in these verses); at 2.2 that same gospel which they first believed in and accepted (1.12, 23, 25), now being understood afresh in this way (1.11) continues still to inform their lives (ἀποτιγένητα); and through the vivid imagery as a whole of the infant who is eager and anxious for milk, this understanding of the gospel is focussed for them directly upon the present.

In doing this, in venturing themselves upon fresh understanding, they must, however, take seriously the risk of engaging in the new situation in order to gain knowledge. It would seem that for the βρέφη who long for milk, education and knowledge are orientated forwards as well as backwards, so that for them, in a real sense, it is not simply a case of progression and application in the light of knowledge, but progression and application in order to know. Here, through underpinning the child/understanding image contained in βρέφη with regeneration, the truth of the writer's understanding of the gospel is known and realised by them only through experience and participation. So then, despite the understanding and experience which they have already, knowledge is not something necessarily which comes as a fixture from the past in stock form, a depositum of

lessons which needs only to be applied, but is something which in a way can only be gained from involvement in the present. And indeed if there is always involved in tradition the tension between continuity and contemporaneity, then we might say that upon their ability to adapt and seek new understanding of what they have learned depends to some extent their true awareness of what they have received, namely the gospel and indeed Christ himself. So, and this is where the importance of the situation as the controlling factor is decisive, involvement in the present, the "now", is not only the result of knowing Christ $\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha\theta\eta\epsilon$, but is also the prerequisite $\epsilon\pi\iota\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\eta\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon$ ----- $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$ $\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ ----- cf. 2.21 $\upsilon\pi\omicron\gamma\alpha\mu\mu\omicron\nu$ $\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha$.

Thus in the learning process in which the readers as $\beta\rho\epsilon\phi\eta$ are engaged, there is both a knowing which is antecedent to action, by which the situation may be put in context, and there is a knowing which is consequent upon coming to grips with the situation; in their spanning the situation is the knowledge on the one hand of its arising out of their being Christians and their having received the gospel, but on the other hand it is only in their involvement in the situation as God's righteous and obedient people that there is found the knowledge of Christ as the Righteous and Obedient One of God. So for the $\beta\rho\epsilon\phi\eta$ in their learning, their assimilation of tradition, knowledge is not only the precondition of involvement but its consequence. This kind of "experimental" approach of involvement in order to know, is not in any way set over against the knowledge which is already theirs through experience, v.3, but is rather emphasised and corroborated by it. In this way continuity

and contemporaneity is a live issue for them; besides knowing the worth of the gospel from the past, through which their present circumstances are set in context, 1.3ff and so on, it is also through obedience and present faithfulness that the knowledge of the gospel's consolation and exhortation is known and realised.

In this learning situation in which the readers find themselves, we should not lose sight of the wider theological dimension to the lesson. This theological concern forms an integral part of the writer's interpretation of the gospel for their present need, so that his Christological understanding itself and the readers' circumstances are set in an embracing theological framework. Though concerned with obedience to the gospel by which they received new life, it is ultimately God's gospel (4.17) and their new life is divine (1.3, 23). Throughout the letter there is a note constantly sounded of the majesty and transcendence of God, and that it is with God that both the Christians and their critics have to do. Therefore, in and through the description of the milk on which the readers feed as the suffering and glorified Christ, there is a striving on the part of the writer for a theological grasp of the situation. He deals in effect with large issues, such as the problem of suffering and the need to find a theodicy in asking why it is that the righteous should suffer, or again the problem of why it is that the gospel should be rejected by people, the vexing question of unbelief. It is in this context that we should place his interpretation of the gospel as the suffering and glorified Christ, and his attempt to work this out both as proof of the vindication by God of the elect and as declaration that it is the righteous whom God vindicates.

His concern with the gospel as tradition, therefore, is not wholly, and indeed one might add narrowly, Christocentric, but is rather theocentric. In the tension between continuity and contemporaneity, it is not a question of how Jesus "hands himself on", but of how the gospel points to a theological understanding of the present, and of how it serves to show the place and function of the readers as God's people in the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

From the description in 1 Peter of the readers as ἀπειθήνητα βρέφη and the learning process in which they are there involved, against which we have sought to interpret the letter as a whole, we may note some conclusions which would seem to be applicable for the church's situation today.

a) Firstly, in being aware of the very complex phenomenon which tradition is, and of the complex nature of the problem of continuity and contemporaneity which is inherent in it, one is reluctant to polarise completely tradition and experiment.¹ To do so is to be unaware that tradition itself is not something fixed and rigid. On the contrary it is something that itself embraces past experiment, trial and change in the on-going process of being handed on, in which new information is added on and some is left aside or forgotten.

To discard tradition every time in favour of experiment is also to run the danger of disorientation, the loss of identity or of context against which to make experiment and undertake new venture. Tradition, rightly understood as a living thing which brings with it past crises of continuity and contemporaneity and their outcome, can provide context and stability out of which to gauge and confront the present. In this, in the recollection of having received something and of understanding that it is a shared something and not a private possession, there lies the basis of a stability in mutuality that can relieve the loneliness of decision in the present. A wholly existentialist, experiential approach cannot do justice to the

1 See A. van Ruler "The Evolution of Dogma" p.102ff.

continuity which is part of tradition, nor in its excessive individualistic forms to the shared nature of tradition. So it would seem from our study of 1 Peter that the writer views both the readers and their critics within the context of tradition, and in so doing places their particular problem "sub specie aeternitatis" as a means of steadying them in and giving understanding to the present. He also reminds them of what they have received as something shared (5.9), which reduces the sense of isolation and loneliness in the present.

In attempting to avoid a complete polarisation of tradition and experiment, and in looking therefore for a positive role for tradition, we must reckon seriously with the writer's wide use of tradition in his exhortations. In particular, not only does he put the gospel as tradition in its context for them, but apparently adopts a traditional understanding of the gospel and Christ. We must ask, therefore, whether he is doing here what we thought to be inadmissible,¹ namely applying to the present the answers which others have given to problems of their own day. Is he sacrificing contemporaneity for continuity, retreating from involvement in the present behind a completely traditional stance? Does this show, to put it in an extreme form, in view of his not being what one might call "an original thinker", a certain bankruptcy of the capacity to face up in a new way to the present need? This we have argued is indeed not the case, and his use of much traditional material is not due to anachronism on his part, nor to the inability to come up with something "new". We have noted already his great insight in combining

1 See above p.23.

such ideas as regeneration through the word with Israel as God's people obedient to the word, the stone imagery as applied both to Christ and to the community and so on.

This raises for us the interesting question whether what is traditional is wholly "bad", something always to be shunned in favour of a search for originality and newness.¹ We would have to answer that this is not necessarily so. In the tension between continuity and contemporaneity, the demand for contemporaneity need not result in something wholly new, but may take the form of the re-understanding of tradition at a deeper level. In the tension between the two, it may be simplistic to say that "tradition" and "traditional" are always "bad" and to look for new departures every time. Such an outlook is disruptive in that it tends to see continuity as a kind of constant revolution, overturning what has gone before all the time. So in looking at the image of the child in Matthew, we resisted the temptation to place Jesus in a wholly revolutionary mould - undoubtedly his proclamation calls tradition and indeed on occasion even Scripture itself in question. On the other hand tradition is not altogether repudiated nor was Jesus wholly antagonistic towards the Pharisees and to their traditional teachings.

This, therefore, is to make a possible distinction between freshness and novelty,² and this we must take into account in dealing with the tension between continuity and contemporaneity in the tradition. At such times of tension in the church, in striving for new and deeper understanding of God's Truth, it has often been the

1 See J. Barr Old and New in Interpretation p.190ff.

2 See Barr Old and New in Interpretation p.197. cf. T.S. Eliot's words,
 "We shall not cease from exploration
 And the end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And know the place for the first time". Four Quartets
 London 1959, p.59.

case that "fresh" as distinct from "novel" insights have been won, i.e. in face of contemporary need there has been not a rejection of the past but a recovery of parts of the tradition which seem to speak in a fresh way. In a sense, the Reformation itself serves as an example of this, in so far as it set out, in reforming the church, to recover a continuity with the apostolic church which had been lost, not to create a new church but to rediscover the true church obedient to God's word. More particularly, Calvin in his letter to the King of France with which he prefaces his "Institutes", refutes at length charges brought against him of being an innovator; "they call it new, and of recent birth",¹ to which Calvin replies "in calling it new, they are exceedingly injurious to God, whose sacred word deserved not to be charged with novelty".² Calvin in his letter is at great pains to point out that his thinking is founded on Scripture and is firmly in continuity with the fathers of the early church.

More recently, from Scottish church history, Edward Irving and John MacLeod Campbell in the 1830's sought in differing ways to free the gospel from a dead traditionalism; and though both were deposed by the General Assembly, they maintained that their views were not novel but fresh and in keeping with the church's testimony even though at variance with the theological climate of the day.³ MacLeod Campbell, in the clash between Moderates and Liberals, provoked a great dissatisfaction with the stereotyped thinking of the time, and

1 The Institutes of the Christian Religion Edinburgh 1845, I p.9.

2 The Institutes I p.10.

3 See Edward Irving The Orthodox and Catholic Nature of Our Lord's Human Body London 1830, p.127; Memorials of John MacLeod Campbell I p.82; Proof for the Prosecution in the Case of John MacLeod Campbell Greenock 1831, p.182.

at least lived to see the triumph of his views on the atoning work of Christ upon the church's understanding. Perhaps today we see another instance of the point in Hans K  ng's controversy with Catholic church authority over the question of infallibility.¹ In asking what infallibility means for today, he questions the meaning it has come to have but through the rediscovery of other understandings which exist in the richness and diversity of the church's tradition.

On the other hand, however, in arguing that traditional may not always be synonymous with "bad", with what is reactionary, one makes the requirement of contemporaneity, the "now", of the greatest importance. It may be that in dealing with a situation or problem one comes out with what has been said before, but it is vital to have struggled with the issues, and that one's answers even though traditional have been freshly arrived at. Reverting here to Galloway's image of the child and the family in relation to the question of continuity and contemporaneity in tradition,² we might say that the child is indeed the creative inheritor of the store of family tradition. Such creativity may involve the giving of existing answers - we are all indebted to the family store of tradition - but this should come only through the exercise of one's creative involvement as being true for oneself and not on the grounds of being traditional simply. Consequently, in terms of the child image, there must always be authentic learning as opposed merely to an assimilation to a given position. So, from our study of 1 Peter and the image of the βρε  ν , we have

1 Infallible? London 1971.

2 See above p.29ff.

sought to show that the writer always has an eye to the current situation, the "now", and that his description of the gospel (1.11), albeit traditional, stems from the readers' need and not because it is traditional simply. His insights therefore, though lacking novelty, are nevertheless fresh.

Where, however, there is traditionalism which is really only entrenchment, the maintenance of the "status quo" for its own sake, then there is tradition in its negative, "bad" sense, one which does not take contemporaneity seriously. Here, rather than using what may be traditional to improve obedience, as the writer of 1 Peter may be deemed to have done, the church has often used it to hinder its obedience. Such an attitude as this is indeed to forget the constant on-going process of interpretation and change which is within the tradition, as if it were a matter of handing on some "pure" deposit and of preserving it against attack from without, rather than of growth and change, development and alteration from within. This is not, of course, to say that one can therefore sit loose to what one has received, or indeed to the fact that one has received it (cf. 1 Cor. 4.7). The gradual collecting of tradition as a kind of deposit may be itself a means of answering false understandings in the tradition process, see e.g. "the healthy teaching" in the Pastorals, although one suspects that here to some extent ossification of the tradition is setting in. At any rate, we should recognise that such a collecting was achieved only through inner conflict and debate within the whole tradition process, and thus comes to us out of that context as part of the tradition we have received. So then we cannot, in light of its having come to us only through debate,

expect to hand it on ourselves simply by paraphrasing it, by refusing to take seriously the tasks in our own day and win insights for our own time.

It is, in the nature of the case, impossible for us to resist change or, by pretending to ignore it, to avoid it. We can, however, perhaps attempt to control the rate of change and even the kinds of change which are open to us. Here tradition can be both help and ally in witnessing itself to the process of change and adaptation which are inherent in it. But it is only as we face contemporary need squarely and honestly, and are willing ourselves to undergo the process of involvement in change, that we shall be able to know what is involved at the heart of tradition, the dialogue of continuity and contemporaneity. To cling to tradition for its own sake as a means of avoiding present encounter or to allow it to foreclose the point of decision is to be false, non-responsible, both to the present in which we stand, and to tradition itself.

b) Secondly, and following on from what has been said, one may nevertheless face a situation in which a traditional answer is not possible or relevant in coming to grips seriously with present need. Will not contemporaneity here disrupt continuity? In a learning situation, given the image of the child, what is to be done when what one has learned, as it were, is not able to be of help in face of new demands and of new circumstances? There is a crisis of knowing here, and however much one has learned from the past as tradition one cannot escape a sense of ignorance in dealing with the present.

Here we may recall what was noted from our study of 1 Peter 2.2, particularly the nature of the readers' understanding as *βρέφη*,

namely that knowledge may not necessarily be antecedent to action and participation, but consequent upon it. So the knowledge of Christ as God's suffering, exalted Righteous One is discovered for them only as they themselves come to grips with their problem as God's righteous ones. We suggested that the readers, to use Schon's phrase, had to "span the situation", both knowing what had gone before and yet having to find that obedience in present circumstances in order to know. The church today is also, one suggests, at a similar point; in being called to span the situation, she encounters tension at the point of "not knowing", and her tradition, seen in its broadest terms, is found to be unable to cope with new situations and problems, and the feeling arises that the "old rules" no longer apply, so to speak.

In thus attempting to ease herself into her future, the feeling of being swamped is felt at the point of ignorance, of not knowing how to cope. Here we must rethink tradition in terms of intention and tendency, refusing to be imprisoned in the idea of a fixed deposit, and recover the notion of venturesome faith, the awareness that knowledge may not always be prior to obedience but the result of it. In taking the venture of faith in this way, there must be a willingness 1) to learn as one goes along, being able to use such new knowledge as a basis for subsequent action, or to modify or abandon it if it does not work out; and 2) to see the situation as largely open-ended and hence to keep all possible options open for as long as possible. In taking such a venture as this, the result can only be justified afterwards and not before, and we shall have to reckon with the possibility that such results as are achieved may themselves be only temporary.

In the realisation that it is only as we venture that we shall know, that knowledge may not be involvement's precondition but its consequence, two things especially will be necessary:

- 1) There is the need to be forward looking and therefore to face the question without pretending to answers beforehand - what is it that is required of the church today and how can she fulfil her present tasks? That is the urgent question. We can scarcely meet it by asking firstly how we can perpetuate or maintain this or that, however revered or honoured it may be.
 - 2) There is the need always on the church's part to discern what may belong to the true substance of her tradition and what may only be incidental to it, in the form of traditional structures, modes of worship, ways of involvement and so on - questions for example which are raised in a missionary context where there is the transmission not simply of the gospel but of cultural trappings as well, the problem of "indigenisation", cf. particularly today the emergence of a "black theology" and the declaration of Jesus as a black or at least non-white Messiah; or, again, in Roman Catholic circles in the debate over liturgical renewal and the translation of the Mass into new forms; or within the Church of Scotland in the growing debate over the admission of children to Holy Communion, and also in general in the far-reaching proposals of the "Anderson report".¹
- These and many other such examples force the church in times of transition and change to distinguish what is essential and what may only be incidental in the tradition process. There is always, of course, the temptation to read "the faith once delivered to the saints"

1 Priorities of Mission in Scotland in the 1970's

as if it meant "the theology" or "the structure" once delivered to the saints. It will mean, therefore, reducing much that might be considered sacrosanct to the level of being a point of view simply; thus, as something traditional, it will provide a basis for action in the present, but as point of view simply it will be open to modification or abandonment if necessary in favour of something else. This, of course, is a hard task, and it is one which of necessity can be realised and attempted only through a genuine sense of willingness and obedience to be involved in the contemporary world. On the other hand, as we noted in a) above, to cling to the past in nostalgia and in the name of tradition is to make of tradition a negative force, so that one loses one's freedom; one becomes not responsible to but a captive to tradition, and one is hindered thereby from answering contemporary need effectively. It stifles the knowledge of God's will rather than creates it. So if today the church is experiencing difficulty in knowing God's will, is it not perhaps because she lacks faith which is sufficiently venturesome, that she has forgotten the risk which is inherent in tradition in the tension between continuity and contemporaneity that she must first follow in obedience in order to know?

c) Thirdly, in thus spanning the situation, in dealing with this tension between continuity and contemporaneity inherent in tradition, it would seem that we must do more justice than hitherto to the theological as opposed to the Christological dimension of the discussion. So, to concentrate in a way solely upon Christ as both content of the tradition and as traditioner of the gospel is perhaps ultimately misleading, since one tends to exclude Father and Spirit

as also involved in the tradition process, i.e. one's ultimate framework should be theological or Trinitarian rather than exclusively Christological, and so we have sought to hint at this as we have surveyed some of the uses of the child/understanding image.

So also in 1 Peter, the writer places everything in a larger theological context; the gospel is ultimately God's gospel (4.17), God is the Judge of all men (4.17-18, cf. 1.17), the readers' origin and goal is theologically defined (1.3, 2.2) as are their difficulties (2.19, 3.17, 4.14, 19). It is also, we might add, as God's righteous ones (cf. 4.17ff) that they have this understanding of the gospel and of Christ.

Today in asking how we are to understand the gospel for our own time, we should not forget the God-ward dimension of the gospel as tradition, and so try to move away from an excessively Christocentric emphasis. One feels that Cullmann's concept of Kurios as designation of the (oral) tradition, despite its real attempt to do justice to the balance between continuity and actuality, is somewhat unbalanced in overlooking this aspect of the matter. So also one feels that Montreal, especially in its helpful distinctions between Tradition, tradition and traditions, has also not done justice to the theological framework of the gospel, and in general, in much of the on-going discussion of tradition, the concern for Christology has been excessive.

To recover the theological dimension would prevent us, therefore, from lapsing simply, as was suggested in the introduction,¹ into a "Jesus-ology", of investigating on the basis of Christology alone

1 Above page 27.

how to "eke out" the relevance of the gospel for today, God having so "exhausted himself" in Christ as to abdicate the first person in the Trinity and even the third for the second alone. The re-thinking of the God-ward dimension of the tradition would be of immense help just here in the balance of continuity and contemporaneity. It is significant that this balance is so often noticed, this tension so keenly felt just at the point of the church's involvement in what she believes to be God's world. It is as we work out a theological understanding for today that we shall come to a Christological one rather than vice versa, and to site the Christological more in the theological context would set us free much more to discover God's will in the present time as his people.

In this way, too, perhaps the Old Testament, which is part of the church's heritage (cf. 1 Peter 1.10-11), might be allowed to speak powerfully and validly in itself alongside the New, as pointing to the richness and diversity and fluidity in the tradition process, and as itself part of the church's tradition, to those crises of continuity and contemporaneity which the church also senses today. Admittedly for our writer, the Old Testament points to Christ and is viewed therefore Christologically. Nevertheless, his understanding of Christ as witnessed to in the Old Testament is placed in the context of the already existing identification of the readers with God's righteous and obedient people, Israel. One notes also his straightforward use of Sarah as an example to the women (3.6). The church, in recovering the awareness of its continuity with the Old Testament in a theological light, as opposed to constantly subordinating it to the New Christologically, might find its witness helpful in facing

up to contemporary need.

The traditional portrayal of Christ and of the pattern of the church's discipleship in terms of lowliness and exaltation may point us to this perspective on tradition. The paradox of Christ's lowliness as the exalted One of God, the scandal of his humanity, is that he is open to all the variety of human understanding and diversity of interpretation. So also this is the pattern for the church as God's people, that there is no exaltation without lowliness; we may not hold back in the exalted name of tradition from involvement in the contemporary world, but rather tradition itself calls for our involvement there. If indeed truth is not so much a matter of having but of learning,¹ then it is only in becoming involved in the lowliness of a venturesome faith and of a better obedience and therefore through a willingness to learn that we shall know God's exaltation. That is to take the risk inherent in the tradition process, to see God at work within the tensions between continuity and contemporaneity, and to look therefore on such tensions not simply as problems but as opportunities.

1 See above pp.28-29.

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